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Oral Roberts' Ken Tuttle

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Fevers, aches, sore throats up absenteeism in area schools

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Camp Zama techs learn to connect

Tech Sgt. John Harshman, left, and Senior Airman David Gonzales, both satellite wideband and telemetry technicians from the Operating Location-C, 374th Communications Squadron, Camp Zama, Japan, set up a mobile tactical super-high frequency satcom terminal during training at Yokota Air Base, Japan. The terminal provides reach-back long-haul communications from deployed locations to defense information network systems.

VAL GEMPIS
Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Beef trade with Japan: Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and President Bush spoke by telephone Wednesday to discuss ways to end Tokyo's 15-month ban on American beef, local media reported.

Kyodo News agency said Bush urged Koizumi to resume imports of U.S. beef, while Koizumi reiterated Tokyo's stance that it awaits a food safety panel's decision on whether to end the ban, which has been in place since December 2003.

The ban was imposed after the United States discovered its first case of fatal brain-wasting mad cow disease.

Nepal civil liberties: Nepal's main royalist party urged King Gyanendra on Wednesday to lift curbs on political parties, release all detainees, and restore fundamental rights suspended since the monarch imposed emergency rule.

"The political parties and the fundamental rights are the pillars of constitutional monarchy," said Pashupati Shamsheer Rana, president of the Rashtriya Prajantara Party. "All political detainees should be released and press freedom should be restored."

U.S., N. Korea nuclear dispute: Building nuclear weapons won't solve impoverished North Korea's "top 1,000 problems," the most-senior U.S. envoy on the nuclear crisis said Wednesday, as he stressed Washington's commitment to negotiating a peaceful solution to the dispute.

U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Christopher Hill didn't list all the challenges facing the North, which is struggling to resuscitate its economy and is reliant on foreign food handouts to feed its people.

"If you were to rank [in] order the top 1,000 problems in North Korea, nuclear weapons wouldn't help solve any of them," Hill added.

Australia won't deport woman: A 104-year-old Chinese woman will not be deported from Australia despite immigration officials' decision to refuse her a permanent visa, the Australian government announced Wednesday.

Cui Yu Hu arrived in the southern city of Melbourne to visit her family in 1995 on a 12-month tourist visa, but no airline would return her to China because she was too old and frail.

The widow remained in Australia illegally for another four years before applying for an aged parent visa that would allow her to stay permanently and receive free health care. But under the rules by which the department decides such applications, Hu is ineligible because she overstayed her initial 12-month visa.



Human smuggling murder trial: Truck driver Tyrone Williams, left, is escorted by federal marshals into the federal courthouse in Houston on Tuesday for the start of his murder trial in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants in 2003. Authorities say Williams, 34, a Jamaican citizen who lives in Schenectady, N.Y., was hired by a smuggling ring to transport more than 70 illegal immigrants in his hot, airless tractor-trailer. Witness Abelardo Flores, who admitted he had a long history of immigrant smuggling and cocaine use, testified Tuesday that Tyrone Williams had to know "something wasn't right."

States

Trial for Fresno murders: In graphic testimony that made some jurors recoil, the niece of a man charged with killing nine of his children described the sexual abuse she endured while living in his household.

Sofia Solorio testified in Fresno, Calif., Tuesday that the abuse by Marcus Wesson escalated from touching to oral sex to intercourse. Wesson forced his nieces and daughters to perform sexual acts on him and on each other as he watched, according to testimony.

Wesson, 58, has been charged with murder and with several counts of sexual abuse of minors. He remained in all counts.

Yearbook gun-photo trial: A student's bid to appear with a shotgun on his shoulder in his high school yearbook portrait went to trial in Concord, N.H., on Tuesday with his lawyer trying to prove that administrators, not students, banned the pose.

In a preliminary decision last month, federal judge Steven McLaughlin ruled that student editors of the Londonderry High School yearbook made the decision. That weakened Blake Douglass' case that his freedom of expression was being violated, since student edi-

tors have their own First Amendment protections for editorial decisions.

Firing over milk experiment: A high school teacher who staged a class experiment that encouraged students to drink milk until they vomited has lost another attempt to win his job back.

North Carolina Superior Court Judge E. Lynn Johnston ruled Monday that the Johnston County School Board had "sufficient cause" to fire Jeff Ferguson following his November 2003 experiment at Smithfield-Selma High School.

Thirty-eight honors chemistry students volunteered to participate in the milk-guzzling experiment, which Ferguson said was designed to test the theory that students are designed to test the house on the auction block.

Wright house sold: A Frank Lloyd Wright house in Chicago that sat on the market for months was auctioned Tuesday for an undisclosed amount, a real estate company said.

The 1915 house had been on the market for several months and went unsold even as the asking price dropped from \$2.5 million to \$1.9 million. The owner then took the unusual step of putting the house on the auction block.

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Flu-like virus hits hard at Misawa schools

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — School nurses are reminding parents to keep children from fevers home as influenza — or a nasty virus with similar symptoms — appears to be cycling through the schools.

"We've been sending home 10 to 20 [students] a day from our office, and on average, we've had 75 absent a day for the last week," said Cummings Elementary School nurse Vicki Campbell said Tuesday. "On some days we've had classrooms with nine absent at a time."

Students' symptoms include fever, coughing, sore throat, aches, upper respiratory congestion and in about half the cases, vomiting, she said, adding that the illness usually lasts three to five days, sometimes a week.

"This has probably been the worst I've seen in three years," she said.

Cummings Elementary School across the base is faring about the same. The school's substitute nurse, Shay Bessmer, said she saw 38 students Monday but just two hours into Tuesday's school day, the count already was at 13. "They have headaches, nausea, fever," she said. "If they're not running a fever, we try to get them back to class. If they're running a fever, their parents have to go pick them up."

At Sollars, absences are lower this year

Does caution parents about aspirin

After seeing several children who have been given over-the-counter "baby aspirin," medical officials at Misawa Air Base, Japan, are cautioning parents not to use aspirin to treat flu-like symptoms in children or infants.

The use of aspirin in children has been associated with Reye's Syndrome, a rare but potentially serious and sometimes fatal condition that can cause liver and brain damage, according to physician Capt. Shayne Stokes, director of inpatient pediatric services at the base medical clinic. It can occur if children are infected with the virus that causes chicken pox or influenza and take aspirin or aspirin-containing products, Stokes said in a written statement to Stars and Stripes.

"It is never OK to give aspirin to infants/children unless directed to do so by

a physician," Stokes stated, adding that no complications have occurred in the children who have taken aspirin at Misawa.

If a child has a fever, the doctor said, parents safely can give:

■ Children's Tylenol, at the appropriate dosage for the child's weight, every four to six hours.

■ Ibuprofen (Children's Motrin/Advil), dosed appropriately, every six to eight hours, as long as the child is drinking and urinating normally.

If parents cannot find Children's Tylenol or Children's Motrin/Advil at a base store, they should call DSN 226-6111 and leave a telephone message for their primary care provider, Stokes said. A nurse will contact them as soon as possible to provide recommendations.

— Stars and Stripes

"You've just got to let it run its course. ... Avoid hand-washing, lots and lots of hand-washing. Let's prevent this stuff."

While anecdotal evidence may point to the flu or a flu-like virus being on the rise at Misawa, Maj. LeVette Hamblin, public health flight commander, said fewer people this year have been diagnosed with an

"influenza-like illness" at the base medical clinic. Last year, 984 were seen at the clinic with flu-like symptoms between Dec. 1 and March 1, compared with 915 during the same period this year. She noted, however, that not everyone with flu-like symptoms comes to the clinic for treatment.

Still, nine of 10 cases typically are not bona-fide influenza, Hamblin said. "If you have the flu, you can't function, you can't do the normal day-to-day routine," she said.

If a patient comes to the clinic with a 100.5-degree or higher fever and has a cough, sore throat or evidence of acute pneumonia, a nasal specimen is lab tested. "So far, we've only had one come back confirmed as influenza," Hamblin said.

But flu season isn't over. People most commonly contract influenza from about December through March, even April, Hamblin said. "You can get flu any time of year, it just isn't as common" off-season.

Flu shots still are available for those eligible. This year at Misawa that includes active-duty personnel, people 50 and older and those identified as high-risk for becoming severely ill from the virus, including children 6 to 23 months and pregnant women.

Most importantly, though, said Hamblin: "Wash your hands, often." The vaccine offers some protection but "there are different strains of the flu and you can still get sick."

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Groups at Zama aim to 'teach' teenagers

By JULIANA GITTIER

Stars and Stripes

CAMP ZAMA, Japan — Sitting together on cushy sofas in the back of Camp Zama's Youth Center, a half-dozen girls talked about self-esteem, boys and the stuff of life for teenage girls.

The group, which will meet weekly, is called Smart Girls — a Boys and Girls Club of America program that helps prepare girls for the obstacles and issues they someday might face.

The program gives them a chance to talk about problems, learn alternative solutions and see that the inhibitions a teen faces are all part of life.

"We teach them how to be a woman," said Hilary Allen, who leads the group with co-advisee Susan Rice.

Over the next several Tuesdays, the group will discuss topics such as how to identify people to trust; the difference between sex and harassment; date violence and date rape; and nutrition and fitness.

For boys, the Youth Center features another Boys and Girls Club program called Passport to



JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Teenage girls talk at the Youth Center at Camp Zama, Japan, during the Smart Girls program, which teaches young women skills on many personal issues teenagers face.

Manhood, a program that addresses similar issues, said Youth Center lead program assistant Robert Chance, who leads the boys' program.

The Passport program instills boys with a sense of values and ethics, Chance said, including how to be honest and make decisions based on principles rather than peer pressure.

"The basic skills to be a man," Chance said. "How to relate to people, relationships and pressure."

"Both groups feature discussions, role plays and other events. Parents are encouraged to join their teens at the group. Contact the Youth Center at 263-4500 for information."

the Golden Rule" — do unto others as you would have done to you.

Both programs are part of the Youth Center's emphasis this year on young people's development. In addition to leadership clubs, technology and sports, the life-skills programs are designed to prepare youngsters for the chal-

lenges they soon will face.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America created the programs for state-city youngsters. In military communities, many topics are substituted. For example, there's not a big gang problem on base, Chance noted, but family separation during deployments is common.

The programs are also as far from lectures as the staff can make them. They try to use discussions to encourage the

"A lot of hands-on" involvement, Chance said. "If you don't get them involved they get bored."

The background and skills of the center's staff help the programs evolve.

"Kids need someone like us to talk to because we're not friends but we're not counselors. We're something in between," Allen said.

The groups hold up to 15 kids each. Chance said he plans to offer them each semester and hopefully create a better future environment for all.

"If I'm helping one kid learn to be a better person, that's all it takes."

E-mail Juliana Gittier at: gittierjp@strips.osd.mil

Pa. university offers 4-year scholarships to troops' survivors

By SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., hopes the act of one university "will embarras" other institutions of higher learning into stepping up to support dependents of active-duty forces.

"I hope this will embarras other schools who talk the good game of supporting our troops but are not stepping up to the plate the way Widener is," Weldon said.

Widener University will offer undergraduate scholarships of up to \$100,000 for four years for students of troops killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan, President James Harris announced Tuesday. The U.S. death toll from the two operations is more than 1,650.

Until 1972, the 184-year-old university in suburban Philadelphia had been a military academy. Today it maintains a strong ROTC program and offers undergraduate programs in nursing, engineering, business, education, hotel and restaurant management, and liberal arts with a strong biology program, Harris said. Approximately 6,300 students attend Widener.

An annual \$25,000 payout would cover the \$21,900 tuition and leave money for books and such items. It would not cover room and board. The university will provide up to 16 scholarships at a time, Harris said.

While Widener's program is the only one to offer a full four-year scholarship, about 500 of the na-

Back to school

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers an educational and training benefit to spouses and children of U.S. active-duty military personnel who are permanently and totally disabled. The benefit applies to families of guard and reserve personnel on active duty status.

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program pays \$800 a month for 48 months to spouses and dependent children to pay for education at VA-approved universities, colleges, trade schools or training programs, said Dennis Douglas, the VA's deputy director of education and benefits.

The benefit is available for spouses up to 10 years after the military member is killed or disabled, and up to the age of 26 for dependent children, he said.

For more information, visit the Web at: www.gibill.va.gov/education/csp.htm, contact your local VA regional office, or call (888) 442-4551.

— Stars and Stripes

tion's 3,300 institutions of higher learning have approached the Pentagon seeking suggestions on programs that would benefit GI's and their families, said Gary Woods, director of Educational Opportunities at the Pentagon's Office of Personnel and Readiness.

Widener's board of trustees voted unanimously to continue the program for several decades, especially because most children of troops killed today are young. The University officials anticipate the bulk of applicants to come in 10 to 12 years, Harris said.

The amount of scholarships could change in the future to reflect inflation or rising tuition costs, he said. The board also is seeking to raise money to offer additional scholarships, said trustee and Widener President Arthur G. Scialoja Jr., a 1963 academy graduate.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Four more 2nd Infantry soldiers killed in Iraq

Brigade's death toll rises to 48 with bombing in Ramadi

By SETH ROBSON
AND JOSEPH GORDONO
Stars and Stripes

CAMP CASEY, South Korea — Four more 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division soldiers have been killed in Iraq, the Pentagon confirmed Wednesday, bringing the total deaths to 48 since the brigade deployed from South Korea in August.

The soldiers, all members of the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, were killed March 4 when a bomb detonated amid their patrol in Ramadi, officials said. Wednesday, the Pentagon identified the soldiers as Capt. Sean Grimes, Sgt. 1st Class Donald W. Echo, Cpl. Stephen M. McGowan and Spc. Wade Michael Twyman.

Cpl. Stephen M. McGowan

Family and friends remembered McGowan, 26, a medic, as one of the stalwarts of a successful 2nd ID rugby team during his year in South Korea, playing halfback. By-half and wing, former 2nd ID rugby captain Sgt. 1st Class Dave Clark told Stripes from his new duty station in Germany.

"Steve played for the whole year he was in Korea. He loved the pitch and off the former Casey (2nd ID) players will all be drinking a Guinness

in his honor," Clark said. Pvt. Brandon Uehlein, a friend who served with McGowan in South Korea and in Iraq with the 36th Area Support Medical Company, said he felt sorrow and outrage at the loss.

"The world is a darker and less cheerful place," Uehlein said.

McGowan's sister, Michaela Mark McGowan, said her brother attended St. Mark's High School in Wilmington, Del., the University of Delaware and Wilmington College, receiving an associate's degree before entering the Army.

"He loved the outdoors and anything that involved being physical. He would go on hikes with his dog or go biking and when it was nice out we loved to take days at the beach," she wrote in an e-mail.

"We always used to say that if we were going to die, we wanted to die with honor and no doubt my brother died with honor. He has always been my hero and it seems sadly perfect he would be doing one," she said.

During free time in Iraq, McGowan helped train female medics to deal with female Iraqi detainees, she said.

"My mother and I have had our hearts break because we will no longer have my brother come in the front door and give us hugs and flash his amazing smile while telling about the job he loved to do — serve his country, his flag, and the American people," Michaela McGowan wrote.

Capt. Sean Grimes

Grimes, 31, was a medic. "Our family is very saddened and our hearts are filled with grief," his family in

Southfield, Mich., said in an Army statement. "Sean loved the Army and the military and was devoted to his mission of providing the best possible medical care to soldiers. He died fighting for what he believed in and our entire family is extremely proud of his service. Sean will always be a hero to us."

Grimes graduated from Michigan State University in 1997 with a degree in nursing, according to the Detroit Free Press. His family has a long history of military service, the Detroit News reported, noting his father served in the Navy and his grandfather was an Army Ranger.

Sgt. 1st Class Donald W. Echo

Echo, 38, was from Black Creek, Wis. Before coming to South Korea he lived in Watertown, N.Y., with his wife and two sons, the Kenosha (Wis.) News said. He was supposed to be reassigned to Fort Drum, N.Y., when he returned from Iraq, family members said.

"He liked what he was doing. He thought of his guys before he thought of himself," the newspaper

quoted Echo's sister, Kathy Whiteside, as saying. "When they were in Iraq, he would not give himself e-mail until his guys had e-mail. They were his family, too."

Family members said he earned the Soldier's Medal in 2003 after rescuing a young girl and her grandfather, who were trapped in an overturned car.

Spc. Wade Michael Twyman

Twyman, 27, joined the Army two years ago because he "was a patriot," family members told media in his hometown of Vista, Calif., near San Diego.

"He was doing what he wanted to do. Our country was at war and he wanted to fight," his father, John Twyman, told a local television station.

The flag at the San Marcos Fire Department, where John Twyman served 30 years as a firefighter and later chief of the department, will fly at half-staff.

"I remember Wade when he was little, we all do," said Larry Webb, the current fire chief. "He always had a smile on his face. When he was back here, he came by to visit us and he was just looking great and happy to be doing what he was doing. Everybody was proud of Wade."

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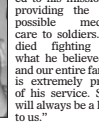
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Echo



Grimes



NBC photo

Twyman

Veterans protest VA budget at hearing

By LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of disabled veterans booted and jeered Republican House members on Tuesday for their budget proposal for veterans' health care, which critics call inadequate to deal with the future needs of current troops.

Following testimony before a pair of congressional committees by officials from the Disabled American Veterans, or DAV, the crowd of more than 400 wounded and disabled veterans cheered House members who criticized the president's budget plans and heckled representatives who defended the spending.

The loudest heckling was re-

served for House Veterans Affairs chairman Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind., who was criticized by committee Democrats and rebuked the crowd at one point by saying "where the river is the shallowest, it makes the most noise."

The proposed 2006 budget includes a 1.1 percent increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which officials from the DAV call too little to deal with the large number of servicemembers expected to return from Iraq and Afghanistan with missing limbs, mental illnesses and other service injuries.

In addition, the budget would require veterans without combat injuries and who make more than \$25,000 a year to pay a \$250 enroll-

ment fee to use department health services.

James Sursely, national commander of the DAV, which calls itself the voice of service-connected disabled veterans, said he wants to see an additional \$3.4 billion added to the budget for veterans' medical care, and see the new fees removed.

But Republicans on the committee have already forwarded their budget proposals to House officials, and they include an enrollment fee and only slight funding increases. Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., called Buyer and his supporters hypocrites for scheduling Tuesday's hearing without any intention of considering the veterans' budget concerns.

E-mail: Leo Shane III at: shane@stripes.osd.mil

AF's Blue to Green program starts off slow

By LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Only about 60 airmen have taken advantage of the Operation Blue to Green program in its first seven months, the Air Force said Wednesday.

The program, launched to help reduce the 17,000 extra airmen in the service last fall while helping the Army with its manning shortfall, offers bonuses to Air Force troops to transfer into

high-demand specialties with the Army.

Gen. John Jumper, Air Force chief of staff, said other retirement and relocation programs have been much more successful. The force is still about 7,000 airmen over its end-strength goal, but Jumper said he expects to reach that reduced level by June 1.

Air Force officials have done essentially no recruiting over the last five months and will wel-

come in about 18,000 new airmen this year — about 15,000 fewer than a typical recruiting class.

Meanwhile, Army recruiters missed their monthly recruiting goal in February, the first time they've come up short in almost five years.

Under Blue to Green, most airmen also are opt for transfer could retain their grade and rank. Sailors also are being sought under the program.

E-mail: Leo Shane III at: shane@stripes.osd.mil

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IN THE WORLD

Summit examines terror funding

MADRID, Spain — Financial experts urged world leaders Wednesday to create a new international institution under U.N. auspices to study ways in which terrorists raise money.

World leaders and experts attending the four-day summit here on democracy, terrorism and security are grappling with ways to combat financing without jeopardizing human rights. But fighting terrorism — particularly its financing — is complicated, in part because terrorists get money using legitimate business as well as by kidnapping, drug dealing and credit card fraud.

Syrian pullback begins in Lebanon

MDEIREJ, Lebanon — Syrian soldiers flashed victory signs and waved automatic rifles as they drove east through Lebanon's mountains Wednesday in the first phase of a pullback, as government lawmakers advised the Lebanese president to bring back his pro-Syrian prime minister forced to resign by opposition protests.

Re-nominating Omar Karami as prime minister would be sure to enrage the opposition, which is demanding the creation of a government clean of Syrian domination.

In the mountains north and east of Beirut, Syrian soldiers were moving out in trucks from bases they have held for almost three decades, and — in some instances — Lebanese troops were taking their place.

Kim gets Russian medal

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong Il made a rare visit to a foreign embassy in his country's capital to receive a medal on behalf of Russian President Vladimir Putin marking the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, the North's media reported Wednesday.

A ceremony preceded the award "look place in grand style" Tuesday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said, and Kim expressed gratitude for the medal and also met with Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov.

North Koreans seek asylum in China

TOKYO — Seven adults and an infant believed to be asylum seekers from North Korea forced their way into a Japanese school in the Chinese capital early Wednesday, an official said.

The intruders — one man and six women, as well as the infant — entered the Japanese School in Beijing and were taken to the Japanese Embassy for questioning, said a Foreign Ministry official in charge of North Korean affairs.

Kyodo News reported that one of the intruders carried a piece of paper with a message in English that read, in part, "We want to go to South Korea. If we go back to North Korea, 'We will be persecuted. Please help us.'"

Cyclone nears Australia

SYDNEY, Australia — A cyclone barreled toward northeastern Australia on Wednesday, as residents of the sparsely populated region's island resorts and coastal communities fled or fortified their homes.

Cyclone Ingrid had wind gusts up to 175 mph on Wednesday.

Investigator questions remarks in Sept. 11 trial

HAMBURG, Germany — A U.S. investigator of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks cast doubt Wednesday on statements made by a al-Qaida suspect to U.S. authorities, including one presented as potentially exonerating evidence at the retrial of an accused aide of the suicide pilots.

Dietrich Smell, a New York prosecutor who helped write the U.S. 9/11 Commission report to Congress last year, said "there's a questionability" about statements by Ramzi Binalshibh. In a key statement that U.S. authorities provided to the Hamburg state court, Binalshibh indicated defendant Moumin al Motassadeq had nothing to do with the plot.

Al-Qaida wanted to kidnap Crowe?

SYDNEY, Australia — Russell Crowe says Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network wanted to kidnap him as part of a "cultural destabilization plot," according to an Australian magazine.

In an interview published in the March edition of Australia's GQ magazine, Crowe said FBI agents told him the threat in 2001, in the months before he won a best actor Oscar for his role as Maximus in "Gladiator."

"That was the first (time) I'd ever heard the phrase 'al-Qaida,'" Crowe said. "It was about — and here's another little touch of irony — taking iconographic Americans out of the picture as sort of a cultural destabilization plot," he said.

Crowe said he was shadowed by FBI agents after the threat and hired private security guards.

Group demands citizens' release

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — An international human rights group has called on Pakistan to immediately charge or release two American brothers allegedly picked up last year by intelligence agents for links to Islamic militants.

New York-based Human Rights Watch also demanded that the U.S. government clarify its involvement in the case in a press release Tuesday. It said the men are "being held at its (Washington's) behest in Pakistan or elsewhere."

The brothers — both U.S. citizens of Pakistani origin and identified as Ismail, 23, and Kashan Afzal, 25 — are known to be "Islamic sympathizers" who trained in Pakistan as guerrilla fighters with Hezb-ul-Mujahideen, a Muslim militant group, the rights group said.

From The Associated Press



Am attends to a child who was a victim of food poisoning in Mabini, Philippines, on Wednesday. At least 27 elementary school children died and another 100 were hospitalized after eating a snack during morning recess Wednesday, officials said.

Poisonous snack kills 27 Philippines schoolchildren

BY PAUL ALEXANDER

The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — At least 27 elementary school children died and another 100 were hospitalized after eating a snack during morning recess Wednesday in the southern Philippines, officials said.

Francisca Doliente said her 9-year-old niece Arve Tamor was given some of the deep-fried caramelized cassava by a classmate who bought it from a regular vendor outside the San Jose school.

"Her friend is gone. She died," Doliente said, adding that her niece was undergoing treatment.

The roots of the cassava plant, a major crop in Southeast Asia and other parts of the world, are rich in protein, minerals and vitamins A, B and C. However, it is poisonous without proper preparation.

If cassava is eaten raw, the human digestive system will convert part of it into cyanide. Even two cassava roots contain a fatal dose.

"Some said they took only two bites because it tasted bitter and the effects were felt 5-10 minutes later," said Dr. Harold Gallego of Garcia Memorial Provincial Hospital in the nearby town of Talibon, where 47 patients were taken.

The victims suffered severe stomach pain, then vomiting and diarrhea. They were taken to at least four hospitals near the school in Mabini, a town on Bohol island, about 380 miles southeast of Manila.

Mabini Mayor Stephen Rances said 27 students were confirmed dead. Treatment was delayed because the nearest hospital was 20 miles away.

Television footage showed sobbing parents carrying blanket-wrapped bodies from hospitals.

Some victims were still vomiting nearly 12 hours after eating the snack, said Dr. Nenita Po, chief of the hospital at the government-run G. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital. However, those who reached the hospital had good chances of surviving, Po said, adding that some parents, worried their children ate some cassava, brought them in even if they did not show symptoms.

Dr. Po said of one those brought there was the 68-year-old woman who prepared the food with another woman. Two girls, ages 7 and 8, were brought in with her; both died.

A specimen of the cassava was taken for inspection at the local Crime Laboratory Group.

Countries announce plans for tsunami early-warning system

BY JOCELYN GECKER

The Associated Press

PARIS — Experts from the United Nations and Indian Ocean countries agreed to set up a tsunami warning system to prevent a repeat of the catastrophe that struck on Dec. 26, UNESCO said.

A fully functioning system that detects undersea earthquakes and broadcasts warnings to coastal communities is expected to be in place by the end of 2006, said Patricia Bernal, executive secretary of UNESCO's Intergovernmental

Oceanographic Commission, on Tuesday.

The Indian Ocean countries have agreed among themselves to set up an early tsunami warning system for the whole Indian Ocean basin, Bernal told a news conference. The basin extends to the 11 southern Asian coastlines devastated by the December tsunami.

At a five-day meeting at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, experts also laid out a timetable for the project and interim measures to help protect the region that was battered by the killer Asian tsunami.

Japan and the United States are to begin providing alerts on seismic activity to the region starting April 1. The two countries have the world's most advanced tsunami warning systems, and a UN-coordinated network based in Eva Beach, Hawaii, issues alerts for 26 Pacific Ocean nations.

Experts say a similar system in southern Asia would have saved many lives in the Dec 26 disaster. At least 173,000 people across Asia died in the tsunami, mostly in Indonesia. More than 125,000 are still missing and presumed dead.



A plume of ash from Mount St. Helens is released Tuesday in Washington. A 30-minute outpouring began without warning, about an hour after an earthquake hit the east side of the volcano.

Mount St. Helens spews ash plume

The Associated Press

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Mount St. Helens appeared to be settling down early Wednesday after a startling blast that shot gritty volcanic ash to about 36,000 feet above sea level.

A fine dusting was reported as far away as 125 miles to the east-northeast in southern Grant County by the time ashfall stopped late Tuesday night, the National Weather Service reported. An ashfall advisory for some areas east of the Cascade Range was canceled at midnight.

"It looks like it's gone back to roughly the same type of (earthquake) signal that we were seeing before," University of Washington seismologist Steve Malone told The Seattle Times late Tuesday.

Scientists said it was the most powerful blast from St. Helens since the latest round of volcanic activity began last fall.

The 30-minute outpouring began with practically no warning around 5:25 p.m. Tuesday, about an hour after a 2.0 magnitude quake on the east side of the

8,364-foot volcano, the most active in the 48 contiguous states, said Bill Steele, coordinator of the Pacific Northwest Seismograph Network at the university in Seattle.

In the preceding hours there had been a subtle increase in quake activity, Malone said.

Scientists said the explosion did not appear to indicate a higher risk of a more dangerous blast, noting that high levels of the kind of gases that often signal an eruption had not been detected in recent flights over the crater.

Clinton put surgery on hold for tour of tsunami-hit areas

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Former President Clinton set out on a tour of tsunami-ravaged countries last month knowing he needed more surgery on his chest. But his doctors had given him the go-ahead, assuring him that this operation — to fix a lung problem caused by his heart bypass — could wait.

Clinton returns to the hospital Thursday, almost six months exactly after having heart bypass surgery, to have fluid buildup on chest tissue removed from his chest. The condition was discovered during a recent X-ray.

The operation, known as a decortication, is described by his doctors at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center as low-risk.

They will remove scar tissue that is pressing down on his left lung either through a small incision or with a video-assisted thoracoscope inserted between his ribs.

Clinton, 58, passed a full physical before going to Asia and scored in the 95th percentile for his age in a stress test, said Dr. Allan Schwartz, chief of cardiology at New York-Presbyterian.

Elder Bush comes clean about jacket gesture

WASHINGTON — Former President George H.W. Bush is confessing after 16 years. The raincoat he had an agent give to a rain-drenched elderly woman in a Warsaw town square belonged to the agent, not the president.

The woman, one of thousands of onlookers, was caught unprepared for the downpour that marked the president's outdoor speech in the capital in 1989. Alongside her, in the front row, stood a U.S. Secret Service agent, a raincoat, presumably the president's, folded over his arm. Bush, standing careless on the platform under a large umbrella, motioned the agent to give the soaked woman the coat, which she happily accepted.

Reminded of the incident Tuesday by a reporter, Bush smiled and declared, "Yes, but it was the agent's raincoat."

From The Associated Press

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Woman claiming sex assault sues Cosby

BY TINA MOORE

Knight Ridder Newspapers

PHILADELPHIA — A former Temple University employee filed suit Tuesday against comedian Bill Cosby in U.S. District Court, alleging that the actor sexually assaulted her in his Main Line mansion and then defamed her when the allegations became public.

The civil suit filed by a Pickering, Ontario, woman seeks compensation for an alleged sexual assault in January 2004 and for defamation stemming from statements that Cosby and his agents made about her to various

news outlets.

Cosby has denied the sexual-assault allegations.

In the suit, the 31-year-old woman said Cosby offered to counsel her on making a career change and invited her to his home after a night out with mutual friends.

At the actor's home, the woman said Cosby offered her three blue pills he claimed were



Cosby

allegedly "herbal medication."

"herbal medication."

She alleges in the lawsuit that Cosby then led her to a sofa, positioned himself behind her and "touched her breasts and vaginal area, rubbed his penis against her hand and digitally penetrated her."

She returned to her native Canada after the alleged incident and did not report it to Canadian police until January, a year later.

Last month, Montgomery County District Attorney Bruce L. Castor Jr. decided not to file criminal charges in the case. He cited the woman's yearlong delay in reporting the allegations.

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Matsui widow wins

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Sounding themes familiar from her late husband's 14 campaigns, Doris Matsui, 60, handily won a special election to fill his term and will become the newest member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Succeeding her husband, the late U.S. Rep. Robert Matsui, she becomes the nation's 45th congressional widow since 1923 to assume the seat of her spouse.

Robert Matsui, who represented the Sacramento-San Joaquin 5th Congressional District for 26 years, died Jan. 1 of complications from a rare bone marrow disease. He was 63.

Los Angeles runoff

LOS ANGELES — Incumbent James Hahn and a Hispanic city councilman won slots in the May runoff for mayor after the third-place candidate conceded defeat Wednesday.

"I called Mayor Hahn this morning and congratulated him on his victory," Bob Hertzberg said.

The decision puts Hahn in a May 17 runoff with Antonio Villaraigosa, who is within striking distance of becoming the first Hispanic to win City Hall in more than a century. It also gives him a chance to avenge his 2001 runoff loss to Hahn.

U.S. infrastructure

WASHINGTON — Crowded schools, traffic-choked roads and transit cutbacks are eroding the quality of American life, according to an analysis by civil engineers that gave the nation's infrastructure an overall grade of D.

A report by the American Society of Civil Engineers released Wednesday assessed the four-year trend in the condition of 12 categories of infrastructure, including roadways, bridges, drinking water systems, public parks, railroads and the power grid.

"Americans are spending more time stuck in traffic and less time at home with their families," William Henry, the group's president, said in a statement.

The report said \$1.6 trillion should be spent over the next five years to alleviate potential problems with the nation's infrastructure.

Database hacked

NEW YORK — Hackers commandeered a database owned by information industry giant Lexis Nexis, gaining access to the personal files of as many as 32,000 people, company officials said Wednesday.

Federal and company investigators were looking into the breach at Seisint, which was recently acquired by Lexis Nexis and includes millions of personal files for use by such customers as police and legal professionals.

Seisint provides data for Matrix, a crime and terrorism database project funded by the U.S. government that has raised civil rights concerns.

From The Associated Press

FACES

Snider defends rock

Dee Snider will go just about anywhere to defend the right to rock.

Snider, frontman for Twisted Sister, whose 1984 hit "We're Not Gonna Take It" salutes teen rebellion, says he'll attend Hamburg (Pa.) Area High School's annual talent show next month.

School administrators had threatened to bar rock bands from the show because of potential injuries caused by moshing, a form of dancing in which participants slam into each other.

Snider, now a disc jockey at Philadelphia rock station WMMR-FM, heard about the controversy and ranted on air about it. School officials eventually relented, and Snider helped arrange for a security company to watch the show.

Costas to receive award

Bob Costas will receive the Dick Schapp Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism at a dinner on April 11.

The award is presented annually by the Nassau County Sports Commission in Manhasset, N.Y.

Costas, a 16-time Emmy winner and veteran of NBC, has hosted six Olympics, the World Series, NBA finals and the Super Bowl. The award was established in 2002 in memory of Dick Schapp, a journalist and broadcaster.

Tale of tsunami survival

Petra Nemcova talks about her harrowing experience and the death of her boyfriend, Simon Atlee, as the pounding waters of the South Asian tsunami, in an interview to air on ABC.

"There are lots of things which I would love to tell him, but in some way, I also feel that I lost the person closest to me," the 25-year-old supermodel tells Diane Sawyer on "Primetime Live," which was slated to air on Wednesday in the States.

Nemcova and Atlee, a 33-year-old British fashion photographer, were vacationing at the resort of Phuket in Thailand when the waves swept through their beach hut on Dec. 26.

From The Associated Press

The kings of movie cool

These movie characters are just the right temperature

BY BARRY KOLTNOV

The Orange County (Calif.) Register

Be cool. It's not just a movie title.

In Hollywood, being cool can be a career for an actor. At the very least, it can be a single role that becomes etched in our pop-culture consciousness.

There are cool actors who never played cool characters. The late James Dean was the epitome of cool in the 1950s. But there are no cool characters in his abbreviated résumé. Johnny Depp is the coolest guy in town right now. Sorry, no cool characters.

And yet, John Travolta has a plethora of cool roles in his portfolio. He started out cool in "Saturday Night Fever," continued being cool in "Grease" and even found cool in middle age with the role of well-dressed loan shark Chili Palmer in "Get Shorty." He reprises the role in the sequel "Be Cool," which finished in second place during its opening in U.S. theaters.

Travolta's thoughtful but tough Palmer got us thinking about cool

10 favorite cool male movie characters

1. Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) in "Casablanca," 1942
2. James Bond (Sean Connery) in "Goldfinger," 1964
3. Luke (Paul Newman) in "Cool Hand Luke," 1967
4. Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) in "Gone With the Wind," 1939
5. John Robie (Cary Grant) in "To Catch a Thief," 1955
7. Rocky Sullivan (James Cagney) in "Angels With Dirty Faces," 1938
8. Capt. Virgil Hilts (Steve McQueen) in "The Great Escape," 1963
9. Johnny Strabler (Marlon Brando) in "The Wild One," 1954
10. Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) in "The Matrix," 1999

— The Orange County Register

guys in movies. Sure, there have been cool female roles — played by the likes of Mae West, Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis and Katharine Hepburn — but they will have to wait for another story.

This story deals with manly men, and the coolness that engulfs them.

The criteria for making the list was entirely subjective. It's a little difficult to describe what constitutes a cool character, despite being a Hollywood staple. It's certainly not Albert Brooks in "Broadcast News." Sweating through your shirt is not a sign of cool.

Woody Allen's Alvy Singer

from "Annie Hall" also didn't make the list. A cool character is not afraid of lobsters.

A cool character has to exhibit a strong measure of control. People trust him and expect him to know what to do in any situation. He doesn't lose his cool when the chips are down. He is usually attractive to the opposite sex and is admired by other men. He certainly can be less-than-heroic. This is not about heroes. John Wayne didn't make the list. This is not about romantic leading men.

Don't look for Robert Redford. This is not about dancing — no Fred Astaire or Gene Kelly. This is not about elegance, so don't ex-



SHINS

Humphrey Bogart exuded the word "cool" as Rick Blaine in the 1942 hit "Casablanca." Bogart appeared in 85 films and was nominated three times for the best actor Academy Award, winning for "The African Queen" in 1951. He died in 1957.

pect Gregory Peck or Morgan Freeman.

Cool is a characteristic that we can't always define, but we recognize it as soon as we see it.

You'll probably notice that the current crop of young male stars is under-represented on the list. Don't shoot the messenger. It's not our fault if the characters they portray lack the all-important cool factor.

Once again, this is not about cool actors. This is about cool characters.

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March 16, 2005



YOUR MONEY

Sick advice about changing motor oil

Dear Tom and Ray: My co-worker and I are having a disagreement about oil changes. Our question: When changing oil, is it advisable to use the same brand of oil all the time? I have always used the same brand, and think this is the way to go. She feels that as long as the oil is changed every 3,000 miles, it doesn't matter which brand is used, as long as you use winter-summer-weight oil appropriate.

Thanks, Jacki
TOM: I hope you don't have a lot riding on this, Jacki, because our co-worker is about to collect. She's certainly more correct about oil changes than you are.

RAY: Motor oils are incredibly similar. And even the same brands sometimes alter their formulation from time to time to make their oils better... or cheaper.

TOM: There are only a few make sure the bottle of oil you're buying is suitable for your car. First, you want to look for the API seal. That's the American Petroleum Institute, an organization that certifies that motor oils meet the cooperative standards set by engineers, manufacturers and graduate students in chemistry.

RAY: Next, you want to use the grade of oil recommended in your owner's manual. There are really no "summer" or "winter" weight

oils anymore except in the most extreme climates. Most cars use a multiviscosity oil like 5W-30 all year around (which performs like a 3-weight oil in cold weather, or a 30-weight oil in hot weather), but check your manual to be sure.

TOM: Then check the performance level. API changes the ratings as standards improve, and you want to be sure you're getting the latest and greatest additives and technology. Currently, "SL" is the highest-rated oil for gasoline engines.

RAY: And finally, you want to be sure that the bottle doesn't say something like "may contain small pieces of dinosaur bones." That would suggest that it hasn't been in the ground long enough.

TOM: You can change your oil every 3,000 miles if you're really particular, but we recommend changing it every 5,000 miles at most. Today's oil is good enough to easily last more than 5,000 miles. So if you change it more often, you're just wasting your money and creating a disposal problem.

RAY: Right. Other than using it on his hair and in his salad, my brother can't figure out what to do with all of our used oil.

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Clack in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Question Column on the CarAdvice.com Web site. Distributed by King Features Syndicate Inc.

Click and Clack

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

Pretend you're a cancer!

Author: Risks could save you from breaking point

BY CAROL KLEIMAN

Chicago Tribune

From 1995 to 1998, when Mary Lou Quinlan was chief executive officer of a major advertising agency, she used to dream about breaking a leg. Today, Quinlan, 51, is founder and CEO of Just Ask a Woman, a New York-based marketing consulting firm—and she's not a mascot. She simply used to fantasize about a way to get a break from the "cutthroat" ad world and her demanding job.

My work schedule had gotten out of control and I didn't have a life," said Quinlan, who supervised a staff of 400 people and earned in the six figures. "I was working 15-hour days and traveling a lot—I even took off my heels and ran barefoot through an airport to make a flight—and I was overwhelmed. I was a human FedEx package."

And she's not alone. According to my research, almost seven in 10 people who make \$40,000 or more a year fantasize about taking at least several months off, and one in five 35- to 40-year-olds fantasize about it daily," said Quinlan, who has an MBA and who has also worked at public relations and in fund raising. She quotes this statistic in her new book, "Time Off for Good Behavior: How Hardworking Women Can Take a Break and Change Their Lives."

In 1998, Quinlan, who is married to Joe Quinlan, an independent television producer, quit for five weeks off to focus on herself.

After two weeks of my vacation and time to me, so it was paid leave," she said. "I fully expected to return to work." The weeks of time she claimed for herself were spent healing from a broken leg: "I lived my life for the first time," said Quinlan. "I took walks in my neighborhood, I met friends for lunch, I took salsa lessons, I kept a journal—and the big thing was that I was relaxed and thought about my life for the first time. Did I have a life? No, I worked."

She soon realized she wanted to do research and create strategies for companies that wanted to build their business with female customers. She also wanted to write and give talks and be in control of her life.

"I went back to work and quit the first day," Quinlan said. "I couldn't get back to that life after I once had seen the other side of the fence. It opened my eyes to what life can be."

Fortunately, the agency's holding company liked her idea and provided funding for Just Ask a Woman, which she started in 1999 and bought in 2002. The marketing firm has three employees and, she says, is very profitable. "She works normal hours and has reduced her travel."

Because she at first remained under the aegis of her employer, Quinlan's leaving her job was not a franchising business and her benefits were maintained. But she does have specific advice for others who must take a break before they break.

"Don't do it just on the spur of the moment," the executive advised. "Plan ahead. Figure out how much time you'll need. Make a financial plan, an escape hatch to bid you over in case your leave is unpaid. Get support from friends and family who might pitch in on child care, if you need it, and give you space and time to get a rest for the first time in your life."

Then, negotiate with your boss for what you need, she adds.

"Suggest how work might be covered in your absence. Discuss your plans to return to work—and assure them you will. If you're really miserable you should just quit. Don't lie."

Are too many women taking this sabbatical, "Reflect," Quinlan urged. "Start to draw some boundaries at work so that you have time for yourself, too." The executive believes it is possible to reduce stress by setting a new schedule at work.

"Do something about your situation. It's scary to take the risk of a leave of absence, but the alternative is worse."

TUESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES						
52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% YTD Chg	52-week Low
10,584.34	9,370.48	Dow Jones Industrials	10,512.12	-24.32	-0.18	9,240.00
3,680.93	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,872.11	-2.96	-1.10	2,630.00
363.82	259.88	Dow Jones Utilities	368.80	-2.74	-0.77	250.00
7,435.89	6,111.33	NYSE Composite	7,184.47	-14.14	-0.30	6,000.00
1,539.14	1,150.74	AMEX Index	1,529.90	-2.47	-0.62	1,100.00
2,191.60	1,750.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,073.55	-16.66	-0.58	1,650.00
1,229.11	1,066.72	S&P 500	1,219.43	-5.88	-0.47	1,000.00
548.29	548.29	S&P MidCap	677.84	-5.38	-0.79	500.00
656.11	515.90	Russell 2000	568.37	-5.81	-2.87	450.00
12,189.39	10,268.52	DJ Wilshire 5000	12,098.37	-65.26	-0.54	10,000.00

NYSE				
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Most Active (\$1 or more)	Most Active (\$1 or more)	Most Active (\$1 or more)	Most Active (\$1 or more)
Alcoa	570671	7.13	+0.38	+11.1
Exxon	47706	18.06	+0.57	+2.9
General Electric	19089	15.36	+0.94	+5.2
Intel	16892	26.34	+0.47	+1.8
Microsoft	25648	34.80	+0.58	+1.6
Oracle	15929	26.36	+0.47	+1.8
Verizon	19413	17.63	+0.26	+1.5
Walmart	65568	61.39	+0.52	+0.8
Yahoo!	12303	34.60	+0.97	+2.8
Yentel	128612	21.40	+0.84	+3.9

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS				
Name	High	Low	Net Change	% YTD
Alliant Techsystems	48	47.82	+0.38	+11.1
Airbus	1.00	0.95	+0.05	+2.9
Boeing	120	119.50	+0.50	+2.1
General Dynamics	87	86.29	+0.29	+1.6
Harris Corp.	48	47.82	+0.38	+11.1
Lockheed Martin	120	119.50	+0.50	+2.1
Northrop Grumman	48	47.82	+0.38	+11.1
Raytheon	48	47.82	+0.38	+11.1
Rockwell International	48	47.82	+0.38	+11.1
Teledyne	48	47.82	+0.38	+11.1
United Technologies	1.76	1.70	+0.26	+1.6

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS				
Name	High	Low	Net Change	% YTD
Fidelity Invest. Growth	38.29	38.14	+0.15	+2.8
Fidelity Invest. Growth	40.00	39.85	+0.15	+3.6
Fidelity Divd Growth	40.00	39.85	+0.15	+3.6
Fidelity Divd Growth	40.00	39.85	+0.15	+3.6
Fidelity Divd Growth	40.00	39.85	+0.15	+3.6
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EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (March 9)	-102.90
South Korean won (March 9)	-79.90
U.S. dollar (March 9)	-0.7323
British pound (March 9)	-1.5197
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	1.377
British pound (pound)	1.5291
British pound (pound)	1.5291
Denmark (Krone)	1.581
Egypt (Pound)	\$1,334/100
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.797
India (Rupee)	46.87
Ireland (Krona)	99.36
Israel (Sheqel)	18.00
Japan (Yen)	106.71
Kuwait (Dinar)	2.901
Norway (Krone)	6.318
Philippine (Peso)	49.65
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.759
Singapore (Dollar)	1.0047
South Korea (Won)	1.0047
Taiwan (New Dollar)	36.30
Thailand (Baht)	53.76

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Thailand (Baht)	53.76

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Mercile	
Gold	\$430.30
Silver	\$7.502

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	
Discount rate	5.50
Federal funds market rate	1.8
3-month bill	2.75
6-month bill	2.75
Source: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Reviewing credit reports

MarketWatch
NEW YORK — You should check your credit report at least once a year, but many Americans don't. In fact, many Americans have never reviewed a credit report, which consists of all your current lines of credit and loans, as well as black marks such as late payments and overdraft charges.

According to a survey by Experian and The Gallup Organization of 2,007 randomly selected adults, 48 percent of Americans have never checked their credit report.

Checking your credit report is vital for your financial success. Your credit file can reveal poor credit decisions — late payments and such — that can prevent you from getting the lowest interest rates when you invest in a mortgage or take out a personal, business or auto loan.

Reviewing your credit report can also help you determine if you've been a victim of identity theft — you'll know if any unauthorized accounts have been opened in your name.

Under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, all U.S. residents are — or will be — allowed a free credit report per year.

The FACT Act is phasing in the one free report per year across the nation.

Thus far, people living in the following states are eligible: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The remaining states will phase this in as follows:

June 1: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

Sept. 1: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia.

For a copy of your free credit report, call 1-877-822-8228 or visit www.annualcreditreport.com.



University of Maryland University College

Since UMUC began offering classes in Asia almost 50 years ago, its greatest single strength has been the quality of its faculty. Here are brief profiles of three of our faculty members who teach regularly in Japan.



Aline Skoog

- Taught with UMUC in Germany, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, Japan, Korea, Okinawa, and online distance education
- M.B.A. in international management from Monterey Institute of International Studies
- Employment experience in Saudi Arabia and Singapore
- "Global business is dynamic; it is the future. Information is power. I have the opportunity to help students gain the power to be part of the future of global business. That's exciting!"

Paul Lattimore



- M.S. in biology and Ph.D. in botany
- Extensive teaching and research experience throughout the U.S.
- Has taught with UMUC in Asia at Misawa, the Tokyo area, and Iwakuni, and in the DE program
- "Our courses in biology, botany, and environmental science enable students to understand the natural world and some of the developments of our time, such as global warming, cloning, and stem cell research, or other developments that have been important and controversial."



Kenneth Smith

- Holds an M.B.A. degree and a Doctor of Arts in economics
- Taught at several different U.S. institutions and managed his own consulting business
- With UMUC taught in Russia, Korea, Japan, and the DE program, and served as Academic Director for business and management
- "Teaching on military installations is a way in which we can give something back to all soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. Business and economics become more exciting as rapid globalization continues. Not only is business education important, it is becoming necessary."

For further background on these and other faculty members, and a wide range of information on courses and programs, check the UMUC Asia Web site at:

<http://www.asia.umuc.edu>

Term IV classes begin March 28.

OPINION

Merger mania: Size is the law of the jungle

BY ROSABETH MOSS KANTER

“When elephants dance, the grass gets trampled.”

That African proverb could be an American business saying, too. Corporate giants are prowling around, hungry for acquisitions. Will they trample the folks at the grass roots? The biggest retailers are getting bigger. Federated (owner of Macy's and Bloomingdale's) is buying May Department Stores (Lord & Taylor, Filene's and others). CVS expanded its already-large chain by buying Eckerd.

“As retailers swallow, manufacturers follow”—to coin a new business proverb. Giant distributors provoke suppliers to merge.

Gillette executives cite the need for clout with gargantuan Wal-Mart as the reason for selling Gillette to Procter & Gamble.

Size is the law of the jungle. Banks continue to consolidate. Citizens Bank CEO Larry Fish predicts that six big banks will soon dominate the U.S. market. Media conglomerates own local broadcast and newspapers. Telecommunications is shaking down to just a few giants, as SBC acquires AT&T, Verizon and Qwest vie to buy MCI.

Size-merger synergy derives from more than herd mentality or ambition to be king of the jungle. It reflects a long-term economic power

shift from production to distribution. Companies with large distribution networks dictate terms to their suppliers and control the flow of goods and services to consumers.

Long-term economic logic might favor this process, but in the short term, much grass gets crushed.

Let's start with consumers, whose purchases fill company coffers.

Consumers hate mergers, Business Week asserted in December. That's not surprising. In service industries, a change in company ownership potentially inconveniences each individual user of a bank account, e-mail domain, cell phone line, long-distance plan or discount card—not to mention losing neighborhood facilities. While waiting for services to improve, consumers bear the costs of confusion—and upgrades they might not want.

Another grass-roots worry is rising prices if competition decreases. At a House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing last week, U.S. Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., asked six telecom CEOs involved in three potential mega-mergers to guarantee not to raise post-acquisition prices. No promises.

The work force isn't happy either. A Conference Board report on falling U.S. job satisfaction finds widespread discontent across ages and incomes. Half of all Americans surveyed say

they're satisfied with their jobs, down from nearly 60 percent in 1995; only 14 percent feel very satisfied. In a related study, 40 percent feel disconnected from their employers. 25 percent are just “showing up to collect a paycheck.” Mergers add uncertainty and anxiety that depress satisfaction.

Some laid-off employees pray for work, others decide to worship something bigger than business. After merger-related layoffs in a suburban high-tech corridor, church attendance increased.

Community leaders deplore acquisitions that remove a local headquarters. My research shows that companies contribute more money and leadership in their home office city. A division owned by a giant elsewhere doesn't have the same check-writing ability. Local nonprofits find corporate support shrinking—unless they, too, expand their networks across cities to match giants' national reach.

Personally, I don't hate all mergers. I just hate the way most are managed. Attention focuses on making the deal, not on what happens afterward.

Some mergers do bring instant improvements. CVS enhanced pharmacies at former Eckerd stores. Shinhan Financial Group in South Korea raised wages for workers in an acquired bank. Others create funds to maintain local community support for several years. This shows what's possible.



Opposition to mergers by local politicians is often misguided and futile. But if concerned citizens can't trip the elephant, they don't have to let grass grow under their feet either.

Consumers can make noise at the first announcements and vote with their wallets. Workers can keep skills fresh and an eye on starting their own business. Voters can insist on better programs to help with transitions and attract new jobs. Local nonprofits can de-

velop innovations valuable outside their community. Communities can encourage leadership from those more deeply planted than big companies; entrepreneurs (including women) and professional sectors such as education and health.

We know what kinds of beasts the elephants are. That makes it even more important to cultivate trample-proof grass.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter is a Harvard Business School professor and author of "Commitment: How we choose this life." She wrote this for The Miami Herald.

Brusque Bolton now will set tone for U.S. at U.N.

BY SUSAN E. RICE

President Bush has shocked even his most cynical critics by nominating the combative neoconservative John Bolton to one of our most complex and sensitive diplomatic posts: U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Bolton served the past four years as undersecretary of state for arms control, telecommunications, though then-Secretary of State Colin Powell initially resisted his appointment.

Condoleezza Rice, who passed over Bolton for deputy secretary despite strong support from him, fired Vice President Dick Cheney, put on a brave face Monday in announcing his appointment. She stressed the administration's commitment to U.N. reform and praised Bolton as a friend of the United Nations who helped repeal the notorious General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism. But as Rice must know, keeping Bolton off her team at State may prove a Pyrrhic victory, if he takes his notorious abrasive style to New York.

The job of U.N. ambassador is always important and delicate, but arguably never more so than now. The United Nations is facing unprecedented, justified criticism for its role in the oil-for-food scandal and its failure to prevent peacekeepers from sexually exploiting civilians in Congo. Several Republican members of Congress are gunning for Secretary-General Kofi Annan's head. In response, Annan is shaking up his management team and reminding the United States how badly it needs the United Nations.

Indeed, the United States is relying on the United Nations to carry out a massive tsunami-recovery effort and 17 peacekeeping missions, to support the democratization processes in Afghanistan and Iraq, and to pressure Iran to halt its nuclear program. At the

60th anniversary of its founding, the United Nations has rarely been more relevant or in greater need of reform.

Is John Bolton the right man? Having served as assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs from 1989 to 1993, Bolton may be deemed qualified, but his record on multilateral issues is alarming. He told The Wall Street Journal that “the happiest moment of his government service” was when the Bush administration renounced the treaty on the international Criminal Court. Bolton led the administration's withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, scuttled an important biological weapons protocol and weakened an international agreement to limit small-arms trafficking. On these issues, Bolton's positions at least reflected administration policy.

But Bolton holds many strong views that

diverge sharply from current U.S. policy. He described the United Nations as “a great, rusting hulk of a bureaucratic superstructure... dealing with issues from the ridiculous to the sublime.” More important, he maintains that the United States has no legal obligation to pay its U.N. dues.

Once a paid consultant to the Taiwanese government, Bolton favors Taiwan's independence and its full U.N. membership—a dangerous position in light of cross-strait tensions and our efforts to obtain Chinese pressure on North Korea. Will Bolton set aside his support for a Taiwanese U.N. seat while manning the U.S. seat on the Security Council...

Bolton has testified against U.N. involvement in Congo, an interstate conflict that has cost 3 million lives. He blasted the United Nations' concept of operations for its Ethio-

pia-Eritrea effort and rejected U.N. civil administration missions in Kosovo and East Timor. Will Bolton undergo such a conversion on the road to First Avenue that he can effectively support U.N. peace operations?

Finally, Bolton criticized any “right of humanitarian intervention” to justify military operations to prevent ethnic cleansing or potential genocide. “One must wonder how forcefully he will work to halt what the administration deems genocide in Darfur.”

Rice asserts that Bolton will be an outspoken, effective U.N. ambassador in the vein of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. ... Those of us who believe the United States needs an effective, reformed United Nations can only hope he succeeds.

Susan E. Rice is a senior fellow in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution. She was assistant secretary of state from 1997 to 2001. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Early detection

HI HONOLULU — Researchers using a sophisticated sensor aboard an aircraft flying at the edge of space were able to spot an invasive tree species starting to take over native forests near the Big Island's Kilauea Volcano, according to a study.

The sensing instrument pinpointed where Myrica faya trees, originally from the Canary Islands and the Azores, are starting to take over native ohia trees in and around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Previous studies located the Myrica trees, but mostly after they had proliferated, scientists said. The study indicates the remote sensor can spot infestations at their very beginning stages when there is still a chance of controlling them.

Seeking CEO's salary

MA BOSTON — The family of a dog electrocuted when it stepped on an electrical hot spot along a sidewalk has demanded a payment from NSTar Electric of \$740,000, the amount the utility's chief executive earns annually, or it will sue, an attorney said.

"We tried to come up with an offer that had some poetry to it, and that would say in very clear terms to NSTar: 'We don't want this to keep happening,'" said John G. Swamley, the family's lawyer.

Swamley said that after three dog deaths in Boston since 2000 blamed on so-called stray voltage, the family wants a sufficiently harsh financial sanction to force the utility to solve the problem.

NStar, which has taken full responsibility for the incident, offered \$200,000, which the family said it turned down.

Drop-out rates drop

TX SAN ANTONIO — More than a third of Texas high school freshmen are failing to obtain a high school diploma in four years, according to a study.

The Intercultural Development Research Association study found that 36 percent of Texas students who entered high school in 2000 weren't around to graduate in May 2004.

That rate, known as the attrition rate, decreased slightly from last year's 38 percent. The attrition rate was 39 percent in 2001-02. The association's first report, for 1985-86, found a rate of 35 percent. It rose to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97 before leveling off.

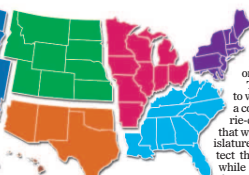
Minority and male students made up the majority of those who did not graduate on time last year.

Conviction reinstated

AR LITTLE ROCK — A man freed of a 30-year sentence for rape will have to serve that sentence after all, a federal appeals court says.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals at St. Louis overturned a 2004 ruling by U.S. Magistrate Jerry Cavanaugh that threw out one of eight felony convictions against Stephen Anthony Sera of Irving, Texas.

Sera was convicted in 1998 of assaulting and then sexually assaulting women while he videotaped the encounters. Cavanaugh ruled that a videotape used as evidence during Sera's trial on the rape



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

charge should not have been used and was prejudicial, because it actually showed an incident from a different night.

Cavanaugh's ruling let the seven other counts stand, leaving Sera to serve the next-longest sentence of 15 years for attempted rape.

The appeals court ruling reinstated the rape conviction and 30-year sentence.

Restoring the trails

PA ALLENTOWN — Restoration of overgrown hiking trails, camping outings and nature studies this summer will mark the start of a five-year program of improvements at Lehigh County's Trexler Game Preserve, officials said.

County Executive Jane R. Ervin, members of the Harry C. Trexler Trust and other officials outlined details of this year's work, which will cost an estimated \$24,500.

The county and trust intend to spend \$2.75 million through 2009 on improvements designed to open the 1,100-acre park to greater public use.

Bill targets prairie dogs

SD PIERRE — Gov. Mike Rounds has signed a bill giving South Dakota ranchers some extra ammunition in dealing with prairie dogs that invade from neighboring private property.

The measure will conditionally reinstate prairie dogs on a state list of pests and allow for local control



Water boy

Chase Barnes, 1, gets wet as he attempts to water flowers and grass around his family's home in Albany, Ore.

methods in certain circumstances. If that is done, county weed and pest boards could poison prairie dogs in one-mile buffer zones.

The new law is intended to work in conjunction with a comprehensive state prairie-dog management plan that was approved by the Legislature. The plan seeks to protect the rights of landowners while balancing the prairie dog population to prevent black-tailed prairie dogs from being listed as an endangered species.

Nut growers head south

FL CHUMUCKLA — Santa Rosa County peanuts have won such a reputation for hardness across the Southeast that farmers sell much of their harvest as seed. Now, the growers are looking south to Central America for new markets.

County Commissioner Don Salter and members of the county's economic development agency will participate in a four-day Florida trade mission to Panama to promote various products produced in the state.

"The opportunity is there," Salter said. "It's well known that Central America continues to open its borders to free trade."

Prosecuted for piracy

AZ PHOENIX — An Arizona university student is believed to be the first person in the country to be convicted of a crime under state laws for illegally downloading music and movies from the Internet, prosecutors and activists say.

University of Arizona student Parvin Dhalwal pleaded guilty to possession of counterfeit marks, or unauthorized copies of intellectual property.

Under an agreement with prosecutors, Dhalwal was sentenced to a three-month deferred jail sentence, three years of probation, 200 hours of community service and a \$5,400 fine. The judge in the case also ordered him to take a copyright class at the University of Arizona, which he attends, and to avoid file-sharing computer programs.

Not bad for a dime

MD BALTIMORE — A dime struck in 1894 at the San Francisco mint was auctioned for \$1,322,500 — the most ever paid for a United States dime, experts said.

The winning bidder took part in the sale by phone and was not identified.

The coin, described as being in nearly pristine condition, was one of only 24 dimes made that year at the San Francisco mint, whose director had requested them as gifts for visiting bankers.

Recruits skip mental test

SC CHARLESTON — The head of the state Criminal Justice Academy says he's concerned South Carolina has dropped a program that gave aspiring police officers a psychological evaluation.

Budget cuts prompted elimination of the tests, which academy director William Neill says not every prospective officer has the maturity and mental stability to handle the job.



My, what beautiful claws

Spikey, a standard poodle, Labrador retriever and American pit bull mix, has his nails trimmed by pet groomer Myra Macias in El Paso, Texas. Macias recently won several top prizes including a best in show and best in class at the Groom and Kennel Expo in Burbank, Calif.



A moving moment

Jessie and Alfred Casorena sit in lawn chairs as they watch the home of former Kansas governor Alf Landon be moved off its original lot on West Maple Street in Independence, Kan., to another lot on South Eighth to make room for a new Walgreens.



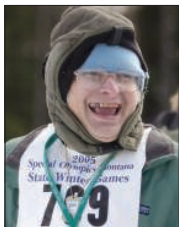
It must be March

Temperatures in the high 50s, snow and short sleeves make an odd combination but also make for outdoor fun for St. Mary's School fifth-graders as they climb, slide and toss snowballs on a snowbank in the school parking lot in Canandaigua, N.Y.



Dig those clams

Commercial crabber Allen Heckard enjoys a day off from his boat digging for razor clams in Long Beach, Wash. The razor clam season lasts only three days.



A special Olympian

Dan Craver of Kalispell, Mont., smiles broadly after finishing a snowshoe race during the Special Olympics Montana 2005 Winter Games at Big Mountain in Whitefish, Mont.



Easy rider

Milo, a rat terrier, checks out the view while being chauffeured through Cameron Park in Waco, Texas, by his owner Craig Row, who took advantage of the sunny day.

Dorm precautions

WY CHEYENNE — Fire sprinkler systems will be installed at all Wyoming college residence halls. A dormitory fire at Northwest College a year ago was the impetus for the retrofit, authorized under a supplemental budget bill signed into law by Gov. Dave Freudenthal. No one was seriously hurt last March in the blaze, which caused \$5.8 million in damage.

Alleged counterfeit

CA SAN JOSE — A federal grand jury has indicted three people for allegedly using counterfeit credit cards to ring up millions of dollars in fraudulent purchases in the United States and Canada between 1998 and 2001.

The case "may be one of the largest counterfeit credit card rings ever discovered in North America," said Paul Morrissey, special agent in charge of the Secret Service's San Francisco field office.

Prosecutors said the suspects stole credit card numbers and used the accounts to make purchases in San Francisco, New York, Philadelphia and Seattle, and the Canadian cities of Calgary and Vancouver between 1998 and 2001.

Raids in Oakland, Calif., and Vancouver turned up thousands of phony cards and equipment needed to make them, authorities said.

Something fishy here

AZ TUCSON — A controlled flood meant to aid fish in the Grand Canyon may have had the opposite effect.

Researchers hoped the 90-hour release of water in November from the Glen Canyon Dam would redistribute sediment to create beaches, plant-rooting soil, and backwaters and pools to help fish breed.

But scientists studying the effects of the flood announced they found 63 percent fewer of an endangered minnow called a humpback chub than before the flooding. They are not sure why.

The fish caught after the flooding tended to be somewhat larger than fish examined before the flood, suggesting that the smallest fish declined most significantly, said Lew Coggins, a fisheries biologist.

Determined employee

FL WESTON — Her car made a spectacular crash into an alligator-infested canal and she couldn't swim, but Ana Maria Amaya still got to work on time.

Amaya's car clipped another vehicle on Alligator Alley, the highway connecting Fort Lauderdale and Florida's Gulf Coast, and went airborne, police said. She landed in the roadside canal and began sinking as other motorists stopped and called 911.

Although she can't swim, Amaya, 32, climbed out and headed to dry ground — after stopping and returning to the car to retrieve her immigration papers in her purse. One witness reported seeing two alligators near the car.

Instead of taking the day off, Amaya got a ride a few hours later to the restaurant where she works, arriving on time.

Cheaters never prosper

MA BOSTON — Harvard Business School will reject 119 applicants who hacked into the

school's admission site to see if they had been accepted, the school's dean Kim Clark said.

"This behavior is unethical at best — a serious breach of trust that cannot be countered by rationalization," Clark said.

Systems at about six business schools were hacked into after someone posted instructions on an online message board. Most applicants saw only blank screens when they tapped into their files, but some Harvard applicants glimpsed preliminary decisions about whether they would be admitted.

Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business has already said it will deny the applications of proven hackers.

Prescription for needy

KS TOPEKA — While many states consider reducing benefits or overhauling social programs to save money, Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius wants to expand medical services for the needy.

Sebelius, a Democrat, has proposed increasing tobacco taxes to finance an expansion of the state's Medicaid program to cover more poor adults, making her an unusual example of a governor who wants to spend more.

Sebelius' goal is Medicaid coverage for adults at the federal poverty level, \$19,350 for a family of four, instead of the current threshold of \$7,160.

Spreading the wealth

ME FREEPORT — About 4,700 L.L. Bean employees will receive bonuses totaling 12.5 percent of their annual base salaries after the company announced record sales of \$1.4 billion for fiscal 2004. An additional 5,600 seasonal workers will get \$150 bonuses. The privately held L.L. Bean said sales increased 9 percent from 2003.

Making music together

MO ST. LOUIS — Musicians from 14 symphony orchestras across the country were set to join St. Louis Symphony musicians for a free concert to thank the community for its support during a recently ended two-month strike. The program will feature more than 80 musicians who will be directed by Benjamin Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic.

Girl, 5, kicked off bus

TX DALLAS — A school bus driver accused of forcing a 5-year-old girl to get off the bus more than a mile from her scheduled stop was placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation.

Jadian Anderson said the driver made her daughter, Syria, get off the bus after she complained that another student was hitting her. "He did not leave her with another adult; he left her on the street," Anderson said. "He was very negligent, and he endangered my child."

Syria walked about a half mile before a crossing guard saw her and noticed she was crying. While the guard was trying to figure out where she lived, a relative drove by, saw the girl and picked her up.

The driver, who was not identified, also is employed by the Dallas Independent School District as a hall monitor.

Stories and photos from wire services

Horoscope

The headstrong Aries lunar energy causes some to be overly aggressive, thinking that the louder they talk or the more they repeat themselves, the better their chances of being heard. The opposite is true. With so much Pisces energy in the heavens, subtlety communicates much more clearly. Done to wit: humble and even coy.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 11). You're on a mission — nearly obsessed, really! This intense degree of focus is what it takes for mastery and attainment of something that goes to the elite few! In May, circulate, and make valuable contacts. Finances improve, and because of this, you're able to fund life-improving summer projects. Love is an adventure with Leo and Libra.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). That unpleasant person or awkward issue must now be dealt with directly. Avoidance is pointless. Like a bad French movie, your life will keep intersecting with the thing until a madcap culmination is reached.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When communication is missed and events don't unfold clearly, extend the benefit of the doubt. You're so on the go that even people who should know how to find you have a hard time tracking you down.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The saying goes that "rejection is God's protection." In spite of recent reversals, the demand for what only you can deliver has not slackened in the slightest. You're still charismatic, and tonight's events prove it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're a giving soul. But the neediness in the world is just too strong a current and succumbing to it will drag you in over your head. Though you won't be able to give people all they want from you, give what you can.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your inventiveness, intuition and ingenuity sparkle up everything you touch. You've got answers that even the

powers of Google couldn't deliver! Too bad friends don't follow your advice, but hey, at least you follow your own.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Sentimentality dictates some of your activities. It's not like you, and maybe that's the appeal. You feel soft and pliable. It's time to admit it: Your passing fancy is growing into an abiding attachment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll witness the domino effect. Perhaps the sharpened-up plans of the day would discourage a less creative soul, but you'll make something magical out of the whole mess. You're nothing if not resilient.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your psychic antennae are activated. Someone is either talking about what you can do for him or her or fantasizing about same. What a coincidence — you were just thinking about what that person might do for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). What's life without glamour, art and adventure? Unless you do some research or make some plans for the weekend, you're about to find out! Get on that A Gemini can contribute.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Even if you're destined for a day of labor, find ways to cut loose and have a little fun. Your association with a Leo or Aquarius helps. Playful electricity is in the air. Join the merry-go-round of people out and about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). What would happen if you just let go of plugging commitment issues? Maybe you're just fine with the level of commitment you have. Love is more fun if you play it by ear now anyway.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Abandon antiquated ideas and outdated methods for the modern, streamlined and efficient. The more you automate your life, the more time you have to be frivolous and spontaneous. Reintroduce yourself to the concept of fun.

Creators Syndicate

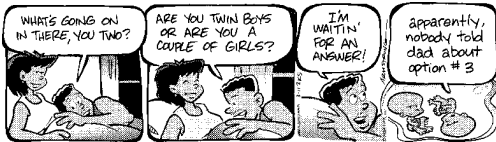
Holiday Mathis



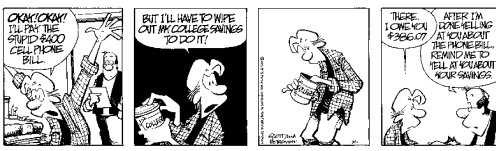
Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



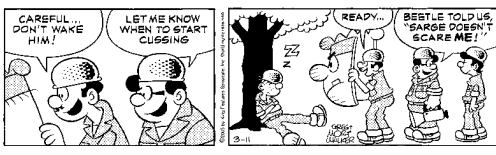
Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



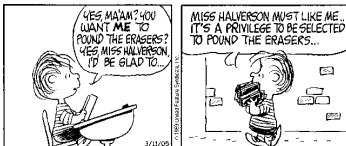
Red and Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



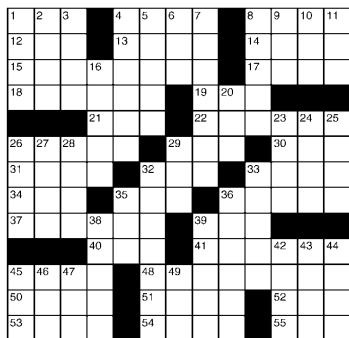
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



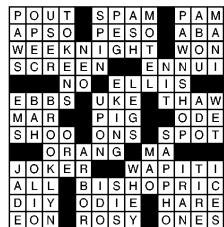
Across

- 1 Food container
- 4 Dressed
- 8 Beanie-chair sound
- 12 "All the Things You"
- 13 It's over your head
- 14 Stash
- 15 Multiply by six
- 17 Groucho-like look
- 18 Spuds
- 19 Big flap
- 21 Expert
- 22 Vicente Fox's land
- 26 Opposite of "go"
- 29 Charlotte's creation
- 30 Train component
- 31 Easy gait
- 32 Standard
- 33 Titanic problem
- 34 Smelterly input
- 35 Predicament
- 36 Tea holder
- 37 Cartoon kid with a laboratory
- 39 Nursery item
- 40 Italian article
- 41 In the neighborhood
- 45 Fairy-tale baddie
- 48 Having a particular surface
- 50 "What's — for me?"
- 51 Pennsylvania port
- 52 Public radio's

Down

- 53 Comprehends
- 54 Back talk
- 55 Sauce source
- 1 Threw
- 3 Barbershop call
- 4 House of worship
- 5 Omission
- 6 Have a bug
- 7 Visionary
- 8 Moss pink, e.g.
- 9 Goller's concern
- 10 Metrical tribute
- 11 According to
- 16 Rib
- 20 Society newbie
- 23 Carol Higgins
- 24 Check for proof of age
- 25 Wanton revelry
- 26 Lumox
- 27 Traditional tales
- 28 Pinnacle
- 29 Depilation method
- 32 Penzance crew
- 33 Ronstadt's was
- 34 blue
- 35 Swamp
- 36 Conqueror of
- 38 Massachusetts school
- 39 Urban fleet
- 42 "Exodus" author
- 43 Pianist Peter
- 44 Moment of truth, maybe
- 45 Freak (out)
- 46 Inseparable
- 47 Brightened up
- 49 Tide competitor

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-11

CRYPTOQUIP

BIDV GPR ODSEOD UP
YRZSICHD GPRZ PBV IPZHD,
GPR BEMM DADVURCMMG
ICAD UP YPVG RY.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: HAVE YOU HEARD THAT THE VANDALS DESTROYED ROAD SIGNS, PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS?
Today's Cryptquip Clue: Y equals P

Furniture	510	Furniture	510	Home Electronics	570	Jobs Offered	630	Sporting Goods	980	Miscellaneous	1040
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0	Jobs Offered
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630	Sporting Goods	980	Miscellaneous	1040
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[illegible]

Big unit not perfect vs. Braves

The Associated Press

Randy Johnson's much-anticipated debut with the New York Yankees wasn't filled with awesome fastballs or knee-buckling sliders — and no one seemed to mind.

After all, he was acquired for October.

Mark Mulder's second outing for St. Louis was much more in line with what the Cardinals expected from their new No. 1 starter.

Johnson worked two innings Tuesday in an 8-2 loss to the Atlanta Braves at Kissimmee, Fla. He threw 36 pitches, 22 for strikes, and gave up a two-run homer to old nemesis Chipper Jones in an uneven performance.

"It looked like his first spring outing," Jones said. "I don't think anybody in baseball expected him to come out blowing 97. A guy like Randy's got to get his feet under him."

Johnson said he felt fine physically after being scratched from his first scheduled start last week because of a tight left calf.

After opening with a strikeout, Johnson allowed a single to Brian Jordan and fell behind 2-0 to Jones before the Braves third baseman drove a 92 mph fastball over the left-field fence.

The Yankees didn't start pursuing Johnson last summer just to add a few victories during the regular season. Instead, they pushed to finally complete a drawn-out trade with Arizona in January because they needed an ace in the postseason.

And that's exactly why nobody sounded worried about the 41-year-old Johnson losing his first outing of spring training.

"I know I will have a long way to go to be ready for opening day," Johnson said. "But we'll get there."

In his second start since being acquired from Oakland in the offseason, Mulder allowed two runs and five hits in three innings of the Cardinals' 9-7 victory over the Washington Nationals at Jupiter, Fla.

"I gave up a couple of runs, but they were the only two bad pitches I made," said Mulder, who walked one and struck out three. "I felt pretty better. My delivery was better and I was locating the ball better."

It was a big improvement for Mulder, who lasted only one inning in his first spring training appearance against the New York Mets. He needed 44 pitches to get three outs in that one, walking four and giving up a two-run single.

At Bradenton, Fla., NL Rookie of the Year Jason Bay injured his wrist driving for a fly ball in the Pittsburgh Pirates 10-4 loss to the Cincinnati Reds. Bay will miss at least a week with a bone bruise, but should be ready for opening day.

At Tucson, Ariz., Luis Gonzalez made his first start since elbow surgery last August, and pinch-hitter Tony Clark hit a three-run double in Arizona's 10-2 win over a split



Atlanta's Chipper Jones is congratulated by teammate Raul Mondesi after a two-run home run off the New York Yankees' Randy Johnson.

squad of Oakland Athletics. Gonzalez had a sacrifice fly in the fifth inning, hitting out of 0-for-2 and 10-for-7 this spring. He made a throw to home plate from left field in the third inning that was too late to get Dan Johnson.

"My mechanics weren't quite what I've been working on," Gonzalez said. "Just getting the ball in was good enough for me. It's nice to be back out on the field."

Red Sox 7, Twins (ss) 4: At Fort Myers, Fla., Matt Clement allowed a leadoff homer to Luis Rivas, then retired his final eight batters in his second spring training start since leaving the Chicago Cubs and signing a three-year, \$25.5 million contract with Boston. David Ortiz hit a solo homer and Manny Ramirez added a two-run shot in the sixth for Boston.

Giants 5, Rangers 1: At Scottsdale, Ariz., Noah Lowry gave up one hit in three innings to lead San Francisco. Texas' Richard Hidalgo hit a home run in the seventh off Jason Christiansen.

Blue Jays (ss) 6, Phillies 4: At Dunedin, Fla., Toronto's Dave Bush and Philadelphia's Brett Myers pitched three innings apiece. Bush allowed one run and three hits, Myers one run on four hits.

Blue Jays (ss) 2, Twins (ss) 1: At Fort

Myers, Fla., Gabe Gross, Toronto's first-round pick in 2001, went 2-for-2 with his fourth homer in four days and threw out a runner at home from left field. Kyle Lohse gave up two runs in two innings with two strikeouts for Minnesota.

Marlins 3, Dodgers 0: At Vero Beach, Fla., Wilson Alvarez made an impressive bid for a spot in the Los Angeles Dodgers' rotation, pitching two perfect innings. Kazuhisa Ishii, one of his competitors, gave up three unearned runs in two innings. In his second start for the Dodgers, Derek Lowe allowed three hits in four innings.

Mets 7, Orioles 4: At Port St. Lucie, Fla., Mike Piazza and David Wright had RBI doubles for New York, and Kris Benson allowed three hits and a run in three innings. Orioles second baseman Enrique Wilson went 3-for-4 with an RBI.

Indians 21, Astros 4: At Kissimmee, Fla., Grady Sizemore, competing with former AL MVP Juan Gonzalez for a spot in Cleveland's outfield, led the Indians with five RBIs. Jeff Loefer went 3-for-3 with four RBIs and Josh Bard went 3-for-3 and scored four runs for the Indians.

Houston starter Dave Burba allowed six hits and eight runs before being chased with two outs in the bottom of the third.

Padres 18, Brewers (ss) 5: At Phoenix, John Knoop hit a grand slam, Ryan Klesko had a two-run homer and Mark Loretta had two outings among his three hits. Victor Santos, vying for a spot in the Brewers' rotation, allowed seven hits and six runs in 1 2/3 innings, 4/6, 5/6, 6/6, 3/6, 3/6.

Geoff Jenkins homered twice for the Brewers and new teammate Carlos Lee also homered.

Athletics (ss) 6, Cubs (ss) 4: At Mesa, Ariz., Carlos Zambrano pitched three scoreless innings for the Cubs. Joe Blanton allowed two hits over three shutout innings for Oakland.

Cubs (ss) 4, Royals 0: At Surprise, Ariz., Glendon Rusch gave up three hits in three scoreless innings against his former team. Royals starter Riney Hernandez, who lasted last season following surgery on his right elbow, allowed one run and four hits in three innings.

Angels 11, Mariners (ss) 5: At Tempe, Ariz., Angels starter John Lackey was sidelined by a blister on his right index finger. Top prospect Ervin Santana stepped in and struck out five in two scoreless innings.

Rockies 6, White Sox 1: At Tucson, Ariz., Jeff Francis threw three shutout innings and Darren Dreifort, his competitor for the No. 5 spot in Colorado's rotation, allowed a run in his three innings. Todd Helton hit his first home run for the Rockies.

Mariners (ss) 8, Brewers (ss) 4: At Peoria, Ariz., Jose Lopez hit a bases-loaded triple in the eighth inning and Benji Gil added a two-run homer. Prince Fielder, the Brewers' No. 1 draft pick in 2002, homered.



Barry Bonds might be a DH during spring training as he prepares for the start of the baseball season.

MLB asked to OK Bonds use as a DH

The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Barry Bonds expects to be ready for San Francisco's season opener on April 5, and the Giants asked the commissioner's office for permission to use a designated hitter during spring training home games to ease him into the exhibition season.

"I've never missed an opening day," Bonds said Tuesday. "I've been out of the game for fans on opening day is great. The main thing down here is to be able to play nine innings consistently every day. That's recovery. When you can play every game in the major leagues for nine innings, that's recovery. Nobody is ever ready to completely play on opening day. It's the Adrenalin rush for opening day."

Bonds had surgery on his right knee on Jan. 31 and when he knoed at spring training said he was unsure whether the knee would recover in time to play the opener. He has yet to play in an exhibition game.

"Whenever he's ready, he'll be in there," Giants manager Felipe Alou said.

The Cincinnati Reds were given permission last weekend to use a DH in five home games starting Thursday so that Ken Griffey Jr. can bat without playing the field. In spring training, the DH usually is used only at the home parks of American League teams.

"After I read that the Reds had approached MLB on this issue and were granted approval, I decided to call MLB myself and ask that Barry be accorded the same privilege while he recovers from his knee surgery," Giants assistant general manager Ned Colletti said. "What MLB told me was that as long as we offered the visiting team the same opportunity to use a DH during one of our home games and contacted MLB before we do it, it would be OK."

"I can't imagine a team saying no to this," Colletti said. "I would have the same opportunity to give a batter at-bats using the DH rule."

Nomo struggling in bid for job with Devil Rays

By FRED GOODALL

The Associated Press

LAKELAND, Fla. — Hideo Nomo's bid to make the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' starting rotation isn't going very well.

The 37-year-old right-hander allowed two two-run homers and a wind-blown triple Tuesday in his second spring outing. But manager Lou Piniella isn't drawing any

"Spring training is early," he said after Nomo's two-inning stint against the Detroit Tigers. "There's still plenty of time for determinations and plenty of games

left for him to pitch better and better."

Nomo struggled with command of his fast ball in the first inning, giving up homers to Craig Monroe and Brandon Inge and a triple to Vance Wilson before settling down to retire the side in order in the second.

The former NL rookie of the year allowed four hits and walked one. Four other Devil Rays pitchers — Seth McClung, Casey Fesum, Jorge Sosa and Franklin Nunez — held the Tigers to three hits over the last seven innings of a 12-4 victory.

Nomo was not helped by a stiff

breeze blowing out to right field, but said through an interpreter that location of his fast ball was a bigger problem.

"It was windy, but still my pitches were a little too high," he explained.

Nomo is one of nine candidates for five spots in what figures to be a young, mostly inexperienced starting rotation.

Piniella would like at least one veteran to earn a spot, and Nomo and left-hander Denny Neagle, also 37 and trying to come back from injury, will get every opportunity to prove they belong.

Nomo also struggled in his first spring start, giving up two runs

and four hits, including a homer, in two innings of a loss to the Cincinnati Reds.

"I feel good about my physical condition, but I'm getting behind the hitters and the pitches are a little high," Nomo said.

Piniella called Tuesday's performance "not so good."

"It was not an easy day to play, not an easy day to pitch," he said. "He got a couple of balls up. And with this wind here, when you get them up in the air they're going to go, and that's exactly what happened."

"But he's healthy and he's working hard. Hopefully the next time he pitches, it will be a better performance."

Pane probing steroids tests seven players

Baseball will fight, calling it 'misuse of congressional power'

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Canseco, Jason Giambi, Mark McGwire and four other current and former players were subpoenaed Wednesday to testify before a congressional committee investigating steroids policy, a move the sport's leadership vowed to fight all the way to court.

Curt Schilling, Sammy Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro and Paul Thomas also were subpoenaed to appear for the March 17 hearing of the House Government Reform Committee along with players' union head Donald Fehr, baseball executive vice presidents Rob Manfred and Sandy Alderson and San Diego GM Kevin Towers.

Stanley Brand, a lawyer for the baseball commissioner's office, criticized the committee for an "an absolutely excessive and unprecedented misuse of congressional power." He said the committee was interfering with the federal grand jury investigation in California into illegal distribution by subpoenaing Giambi, a grand jury witness who might have to testify in a trial.

"Not even the Iran-Contra committee attempted to do that," Brand said.

Brand and Manfred said baseball will attempt to fight the subpoenas. Brand said that to enforce the subpoenas over baseball's objections, the committee would have to vote to approve them along with the full House of Representatives, and a U.S. Attorney would have to certify them. If that happened, Brand said he would fight over the subpoenas would head to U.S. District Court.

Canseco, Fehr and Manfred had agreed to testify. Manfred would speak on behalf of baseball commissioner Bud Selig.

"The remaining witnesses, however, made it clear — either by flatly rejecting the invitation to testify or by ignoring our repeated attempts to contact them — they had no intention of appearing before the committee," committee chairman Rep. Tom Davis and Rep. Henry Waxman, the ranking Democrat, said in a statement.

Thomas said Monday he would testify, but the sport's formal response to the committee on Tuesday said he was declining the invitation.

"The committee will conduct a thorough, fair, and responsible investigation. It is important the American people know the facts on baseball's steroid scandal," Davis and Waxman said. "And it is important that all Americans, especially children, know about the dangers of drug use. Consistent with our committee's jurisdiction over the nation's drug policy, we need to better understand the steps MLB is taking to get a handle on the steroid issue, and whether news of those steps — and the public health danger posed by steroid use — is reaching America's youth."

Brand wrote to the committee on Tuesday saying the hearing and what he termed "overly expensive" document requests "present significant constitutional and institutional concerns about the underlying validity and propriety of the committee's inquiry."

"It is not clear to us how the committee's jurisdiction encompasses the privately ne-

gotiated drug policy," Brand wrote, adding that the committee was requesting "highly private and sensitive information."

"The right to the privacy of this information outweighs any asserted interest in the 'health problems stemming from the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs,'" Brand wrote.

Brand said the committee request "goes to the unprecedented and, we must add, destructive length of seeking actual testing results (and) shows no consideration for the legitimate privacy concerns of MLB, the MLBPA, individual players and other members of the bargaining unit."

Another hearing on steroids is scheduled for Thursday, when the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee is to hear from witnesses, including lawyer lawyers from the commissioner's office and the NFL, and representatives of the NCAA and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency.

"We're trying to get to the bottom of the steroid problem," Rep. Cliff Stearns said. "Are they being used in high school? Are they being used in college? Are they being used in professional sports? And what are we doing to stop this, because it is a felony. What is the baseball commission doing?"

Stearns, chairman of the House Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection subcommittee, said Selig was invited to speak but declined. Stearns said Davis' committee "cannot legislate; they're just an oversight committee."

"We can legislate," Stearns said. "We're trying to understand whether legislation is needed. We've obviously disappointed that Selig did not want to show."



Chicago White Sox slugger Frank Thomas, shown stretching at the team's Tucson, Ariz., training site, is among players subpoenaed by a congressional committee delving into the issue of steroids in sports.

Ankie, unable to make pitches, will try hitting them

The Associated Press

JUPITER, Fla. — Rick Ankiel is ending a pitching career derailed by injuries and record wildness and will try to make the St. Louis Cardinals' roster as an outfielder.

Ankiel, 25, had yet to appear in a spring training game as he tried to revive a career interrupted by control problems and reconstructive elbow surgery. He was to have pitched in a "B" game Wednesday, but it was rained out.

Ankiel said he's been thinking of making the switch since he left winter ball in Puerto Rico after feeling a twinge in his elbow. He was impressive his first time throwing to hitters this spring, but the outings since then have been erratic.

"This whole time, the frustration that built up, it seems like it was really eroding my spirit and starting to affect my personality off the field as well," Ankiel said. "It just became apparent that it was time for me to move on and pursue becoming an outfielder. I feel relieved now and I'm happy to move on."

Ankiel is a career .207 hitter (18-for-87) in the majors, with two homers, a double, a triple and nine RBIs. He was an occasional DH for the Cardinals' rookie league team in Johnson City, Tenn., in 2001, hitting 10 homers.

"I've always enjoyed playing



Rick Ankiel has decided to end his injury- and wildness-plagued pitching career with St. Louis and will try to make the club as an outfielder.

outfield and I've definitely enjoyed hitting," Ankiel said.

"Hopefully, I can pick up as much as I can being around some of these guys and spending more time with them in the cage."

Manager Tony La Russa and general manager Walt Jocketty had been aware for a few days

that Ankiel was considering giving up pitching. Ankiel said they "understood and wished me luck."

"We are fully supportive of Rick's decision to convert to an everyday outfielder," Jocketty said. "Rick will continue to train with the major league club this spring,

and we look forward to seeing his development as a full-time batter and outfielder."

Pitching coach Dave Duncan said he didn't know of the decision until Wednesday morning. "I've been trying to get him ready to pitch."

Ankiel sat out 2002 with a sprained left elbow and missed most of the 2003 and 2004 seasons after reconstructive elbow surgery.

The left-hander made it to the major leagues at age 19 and was 11-7 with a 3.50 ERA with 194 strikeouts in 175 innings in 2000 but developed record-setting wildness in the playoffs. In the postseason opener against Atlanta, he threw five wild pitches in the first inning, the most by a major league pitcher since 1890, and had nine wild pitches in four innings during the postseason.

He went 1-2 with a 7.13 ERA in six starts for the Cardinals in 2001, walking 25 in 24 innings, then was sent to the minors. He didn't return until last Sept. 7 and made five late-season starts, going 4-0 with a 5.40 ERA in 10 innings.

Red Sox seek elbow room

BOSTON — The Boston Red Sox are negotiating to buy three properties near Kenmore Square in a bid to secure space for long-term growth in the neighborhood surrounding Fenway Park.

The properties — a taxi garage, a McDonald's restaurant and the WBCN radio studios — would allow the Red Sox to continue

shifting their offices from the cramped, 93-year-old stadium and allow more room for fans. But there are no immediate plans for major changes to the properties, vice president Janet Marie Smith said Tuesday.

"We have been looking for anything in the area that might help us with our space problems," said Smith, architect of Fenway Park's recent renovations. "It surprised us it took three years to find a single property."

Team owners have refused to say whether they've made a final decision on staying in Fenway Park. Major League Baseball's oldest and smallest ballpark. But all indications are the Red Sox will stay.

Since buying the team in 2002, the Red owners have added seats and upgraded the stadium. Last year, Boston brought home its first World Series title in 86 years.

Committee OKs D.C. funding

WASHINGTON — A House committee passed a supplemental funding bill Tuesday that would authorize the District of Columbia to move forward with plans to build a stadium for the Washington Nationals.

Final passages of the supplemental appropriations bill is expected by the end of next week, said D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton. The bill includes a provision that allows the city to spend local money to issue bonds for construction of a \$435 million project.

Kansas City, Minnesota get defensive

The Associated Press

Kendrell Bell signed with the Kansas City Chiefs and Fred Smoot agreed to a deal with the Minnesota Vikings as two of the NFL's worst defenses plugged holes through free agency Tuesday.

NFL roundup

Smoot had 16 interceptions over five seasons with the Washington Redskins and was selected as an alternate to the Pro Bowl. He will form a quality tandem at cornerback with Antoine Winfield, whom was Minnesota's top free agent signing last season.

On Wednesday, tight end Jermaine Wiggins, who led the Vikings with 71 receptions last season, agreed to a \$7.3 million, five-year contract to stay with the team.

Bell, the former Pittsburgh linebacker, was AP Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2001. He played in only three games last season because of groin and shoulder injuries, and Pittsburgh re-signed the much cheaper Larry Foote, who started most of the season in his place.

The New York Giants also passed on Bell last week because of his injury history and

Chiefs sign LB Bell; Vikings add CB Smoot

salary demands and signed Antonio Pierce from Washington. Pierce had played in a 4-3, while Bell's experience was in a 3-4.

That didn't seem to trouble Kansas City, which has been desperately seeking an impact player for its defense the past few years.

"He is a quality football player as well as a quality person," Chiefs President Carl Peterson said of Bell, who signed a seven-year deal.

In other deals Tuesday, Tampa Bay re-signed veteran wide receiver Joey Galloway and Cleveland signed a former Buc guard Casey Coleman. The Browns also re-drafted the contract of veteran quarterback Trent Dilfer, obtained from Seattle over the weekend, and extended his deal from one year to four.

"I feel like I've got a lot of football left," Dilfer said. "I love this game. I love the travel. I love the way Mondays feel after a win or a loss. I love the pressure. There's not a guy I love football more than I do. I feel like my best football is ahead of me."

Another wide receiver, Santana Moss,

passed his physical with Washington after being traded from the New York Jets for wideout Laveranues Coles. The deal will be completed when Coles passes a physical, scheduled for Thursday, with the Jets.

Another receiver, Cedrick Wilson, left San Francisco to sign with Pittsburgh, apparently ending any chance the Steelers will re-sign Plaxico Burress. Burress, who has gotten less attention than expected, was scheduled to visit the Giants on Wednesday.

"A lot of strange things can happen in free agency," Steelers director of football operations Kevin Colbert said. "We never want to say never."

The San Diego Chargers and receiver Keenan McCardell agreed on Wednesday to a two-year contract extension through 2007 season. The 35-year-old wide receiver will reportedly get a \$4.1 million signing bonus and will average \$3.45 million in base salary the next three years.

Safety Robert Griffith agreed to a two-year contract with Arizona, the Cardinals' fourth free agent acquisition. The team previously signed offensive tackle Ol-

iver Ross (Steelers), quarterback Kurt Warner (Giants) and defensive end Chike Okefor (Seahawks).

"We're making some major changes this winter and, I mean, who's surprised by that?" coach Dennis Green said. "You think I could stand another year like last year? There's just no way."

Griffith, 34, left the Browns to rejoin Green, who brought him into the NFL in 1994 with the Vikings as an undrafted rookie out of San Diego State. The 5-foot-11, 200-pound Griffith made a career-high 157 tackles, including 93 solos, eight tackles-for-loss, one interception and one sack in 2004.

The Giants also announced the signing of former Atlanta kicker Jay Feely and are expected to sign veteran Jim Miller as a backup to second-year quarterback Eli Manning.

New England, which lost Joe Andruzzi to Cleveland, re-signed its other guard, Stephen Neal, a college wrestler who never played football at Cal State-Bakersfield.

Carolina Panthers receiver Ricky Proehl, who turned 37 on Monday, will put retirement on hold and return for one more season, his 16th in the NFL.

Leader of CU investigation feels jilted

The Associated Press

PUEBLO, Colo. — A leader of an independent commission that investigated the Colorado football recruiting scandal said the panel was "stabbed in the back" and that football coach Gary Barnett needs to be fired.

NCAA briefs

Joyce

Lawrence, a former state legislator who was co-chairwoman of the panel, told The Pueblo Chieftain on Tuesday that Barnett and other athletic department officials never revealed the existence of a "slush fund" mentioned in a report by a grand jury that conducted a separate probe.

"We've been stabbed in the back. They knew what we wanted, but they didn't reveal that to us or to [university president Elizabeth Hoffman] at the time," Lawrence said.

"Yes, Coach Barnett needs to be replaced," she added. "The football and athletic staff knew the [independent commission] wanted to know about all the money that was going into the program and they never told us about those cash boxes."

Both the independent commission and the grand jury investigated the football program last year and concluded that some players had arranged sex, drugs and alcohol for visiting athletes who were being recruited.

The commission, which was appointed by the university's governing Board of Regents, issued a report in May criticizing Hoffman and others for lax oversight but stopping short of calling for anyone to be fired.

Monday, Hoffman announced she was stepping down effective June 30 or when a successor is selected.

Marshall grid coach retires

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — Marshall football coach Bob Pruett retired Wednesday after nine years, saying it was time to move on.

The 61-year-old Pruett told the team of his decision in the morning and held a news conference three hours later. Larry Kueck, Marshall's associate offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, will be the interim coach.

"It's not about winning and losing. It's not about money. It's not about anything I didn't get," Pru-

ett said. "It's just time. It's well thought out. This is not a sudden thing."

The decision comes as Marshall prepares to enter Conference USA this fall. The Thundering Herd finished their final season in the Mid-American Conference with a 6-6 record, their first non-winning season in 21 years. The school moved to Division I-A in 1997, a year after it won the Division I-AA national championship.

Pruett is the most successful coach in Marshall history, going 94-23 with five MAC championships and five bowl victories.

North Carolina's McCants cleared to practice

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — North Carolina's leading scorer, Rashad McCants, was cleared Wednesday to return to practice.

McCants has missed the Tar Heels' past four games because of an intestinal disorder.

In a release sent by the school, coach Roy Williams said he wasn't sure how much McCants would be able to play on Friday in the opening round of the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament.

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Minnesota: 800-444-4444, 612-444-4444, 612-444-4444, 612-444-4444

North Carolina: 800-444-4444, 919-444-4444, 919-444-4444, 919-444-4444

South Carolina: 800-444-4444, 803-444-4444, 803-444-4444, 803-444-4444

Texas: 800-444-4444, 972-444-4444, 972-444-4444, 972-444-4444

Virginia: 800-444-4444, 703-444-4444, 703-444-4444, 703-444-4444

Washington: 800-444-4444, 206-444-4444, 206-444-4444, 206-444-4444

Wisconsin: 800-444-4444, 262-444-4444, 262-444-4444, 262-444-4444

Worldwide: 800-444-4444, 800-444-4444, 800-444-4444, 800-444-4444

Milwaukee sees NCAA berth on its horizon

BY ARNIE STAPLETON

The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Wisconsin-Milwaukee Panthers finally got to cut down the nets, thanks to Adrian Tigrert.

The senior forward's free throw with 4.2 seconds left gave the Panthers a 59-58 win over Detroit in the Horizon League championship game Tuesday night.

The Panthers didn't cut down the nets when they won the regular-season title at home, preferring to wait until winning the tournament title and the automatic NCAA bid that goes along with it.

"We saved it because we had a goal in mind," tournament MVP Joah Tucker said. "It feels good to finally cut the nets down. We savored the moment. It means something when you're older and you say, 'We won a conference championship.' But our goal was to get into the [NCAA] tournament."

After reaching the NCAA tournament for the first time in 2003, the Panthers got ahead of themselves last year when they won the regular season and then lost the tournament title game to rival Illinois-Chicago, also at U.S. Cellular Arena.

The Panthers (24-5) looked like they were blowing it again, trailing most of the night and missing 11 of 24 free throws, including the first two by Tigrert with 4.2 seconds remaining.

Milwaukee coach Bruce Pearl called timeout and instructed the rest of his starters to set up on defense while trying to calm Tigrert.

"I told him, 'One's as good as two. We just need one,'" Pearl explained.

It worked.

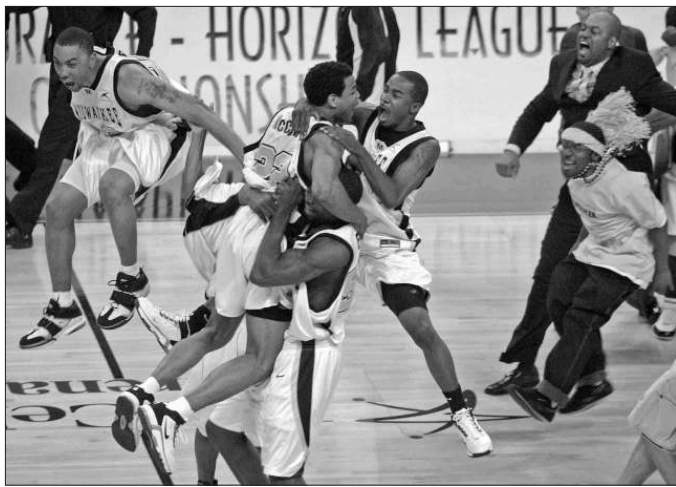
"I could tell he was confident he'd knock down the next one," Tucker said.

Sure enough, Tigrert stepped up to the line with nothing but red shirts around him and calmly sank his second shot.

"It's nice to redeem myself," Tigrert said.

Despite the Panthers' efforts to keep the ball out of his hands, freshman Brandon Cotton, who had 21 points, brought the ball upcourt, bounded the whole time by Boo Davis. He was off-target on a contested jumper that would have sent the Titans to the NCAA tournament at 15-15.

Instead, the yellow-and-black-clad students stormed the court, something that was denied them a year ago.



Wisconsin-Milwaukee players celebrate as fans rush the court after beating Detroit 59-58 in the Horizon League championship on Tuesday.

Ed McDietrich 18 points led the Panthers, who held Detroit scoreless for the final 2½ minutes to avoid losing the tournament title game at home for the second straight season.

Tucker added 15 points and Davis 12 for Milwaukee, which has won 17 of 18 and went 13-1 at home this season with its only loss coming to Detroit, a 78-68 setback Jan. 3. Milwaukee averaged that loss 2½ weeks later with a 61-48 win at Detroit.

The Titans, who went 9-13 this season when failing to score 60 points, were going for their first tournament title since 1999.

Detroit coach Perry Watson was bitter, criticizing the officiating, which he called inconsistent in the closing minutes.

"These things are discouraging. You want your guys to have a fair shot," Watson complained. "It's just tough when you have to look at your guys saying, 'Coach, I was fouled,' and it wasn't called. I guess I question the judgment on some of those."

Cotton's 11 first-half points helped Detroit take a 30-24 lead at the break, and Muhammad Abdur-Rahim's basket to open the second half gave the Titans their big-

gest lead at 32-24. The Panthers responded with three straight three-pointers, two by McCants, the conference's player of the year, to go ahead 33-32. It was their first lead since 2-0.

McCants' two free throws with 10:22 remaining capped the Panthers' 17-4 surge and gave Milwaukee a 41-36 lead. But the Titans came back with nine straight points, taking a 45-41 lead on Cotton's two free throws with 7:11 left.

The Panthers trailed until Tucker sank two free throws with 55 seconds left to tie it at 58.

Ragin' Cajuns get revenge, bid

BY JAIME ARON

The Associated Press

DENTON, Texas — With strands of net behind their ears and Sun Belt tournament championship T-shirts on their jerseys, Louisiana-Lafayette's Ragin' Cajuns had good reason to celebrate.

And making the NCAA tournament was only part of it.

As thrilled as they were to make the NCAA field for the second straight year, the Ragin' Cajuns were equally excited — and, in some ways, relieved — to do so at the expense of Denver.

With an 88-69 victory over Denver in the finals of the Sun Belt tournament Tuesday night, Louisiana-Lafayette evened its losses earlier this season to the team that also ended its run of three straight division titles.

"We really wanted to face them again," Ragin' Cajuns coach Robert Lee said. "We wanted to come out and make a statement that we were the best team."

Tiras Wade led the way, scoring 21 of his 30 points in the second half when Louisiana-Lafayette (20-10) turned a tie game into a rout. Denver (20-10) got within 70-63 with 5:28 left, but the Ragin' Cajuns closed with an 18-6 run that included six free throws by Wade.

"The first two times they played them, we didn't play to the best of our ability," said Wade, who scored a tournament-record 82 points and was named its most outstanding player. "We believe we have the best five starters in the Sun Belt. If we didn't beat ourselves, we were confident we would get the win."

Although Denver missed a chance to make its first appearance in the NCAA Division I tournament, the Pioneers couldn't be too disappointed. Denver has only been in D-I since 1999 after spending 19 seasons in NAIA and Division II.

"It was an unbelievable year,"

coach Terry Carroll said. "We accomplished things no one thought we would do."

Rodney Billups led Denver with 16 points but had just three assists, half his season average. Yemi Nicholson had 14 points and nine rebounds and Erik Benzel scored 15.

"It was more about what Lafayette did right than about what we did wrong," Carroll said. "They're an experienced, veteran team that's been in this situation before and that's a huge benefit."

Wade's NCAA tournament experiences have been bittersweet. The past two years, he's had to watch his teammates play without being able to join them.

He missed last year's trip because he was sitting out the season after transferring from East Tennessee State. He played for ETSU the previous year when it made the NAAs, but left the season before the tournament.

"I finally got there. Finally!" Wade said. "It feels better than I thought it would feel."

Upstaged: At-large berth unlikely for Oral Roberts

KNOCKED, FROM BACK PAGE

In the Mid-Continent final, Scott scored 19 points and Marshall scored 18 for Oakland. The Golden Grizzlies were making their first appearance in the tournament championship. And now, the 8-year-old Division I program will play in the NCAA tournament for the first time.

Caleb Green scored 13 points and Turt added 12 for the Golden Eagles (25-7), whose hopes for their first NCAA tournament appearance in 21 years were likely dashed. No Mid-Continent team has been an at-large selection to the NCAA tournament, but the Golden Eagles have an 81-63 win against Georgetown on their résumé.

They just missed another impressive win, falling 69-68 at Indiana.

"I don't think we have much of

a chance," Oral Roberts coach Scott Sutton said. "It'll be extremely disappointed if we don't make the NIT. I think we deserve to continue to play."

"I'm just numb," Oral Roberts guard Luke Spencer-Gardner said. "I'm not really feeling all that much. I'm just shocked. This isn't the way it was meant to be."

Oral Roberts used a 9-2 run to take a 44-43 lead, capped when Green took a pass from Turt, whirled around Oakland's David Ritzema and scored.

After that, the lead changed five times and the teams were tied four times before Spencer-Gardner's two free throws put the Golden Eagles ahead 59-57 with 2:20 to play.

Scott hit one of two free throws to bring Oakland within a point, and Blutt's answer at the other end left an opening for Oakland to win.

SPORTS



Kadena and Kubasaki teams
seek to continue dominance
in Far East tourney, Page 30



As Oakland players celebrate, Oral Roberts' Luke Spencer-Gardner reacts to losing in the Mid-Continent Conference championship on Tuesday.

Oakland upsets top-seeded Oral Roberts, earns Mid-Continent's NCAA berth with losing record

BY JEFF LATZKE

The Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — All those impossible road trips and murderous nonconference games have finally paid off for Oakland.

After starting the season with seven losses and getting routed up at Illinois, Missouri, Xavier, Texas A&M and Michigan State, the Golden Grizzlies are going to the NCAA tournament with a 12-18 record.

Pierre Dukes hit a three-pointer with 1.3 seconds left and Oakland (Mich.) upset top-seeded Oral Roberts 61-60 Tuesday night to win the Mid-Continent Conference tournament and an automatic bid to the NCAA.

"Even though our record might not show it, we are a good team," forward Rawle Marshall said. "We know how to play."

Oakland got its chance to win after Jonathan Bluiett hit one of two free throws that hit one of two Marshall found Dukes on the left side, and Dukes was looking to make another pass, but he couldn't find anyone open.



Oakland's Patrick McCloskey blocks a shot by Oral Roberts' Caleb Green during the first half of the Mid-Continent tournament final.

"I wasn't on-balance, but the clock was running down and I couldn't find Rawle or Courtney [Scott], so I had to let it fly."

Dukes said.

The shot splashed through, and when Ken Tutt couldn't hit a desperation jumper for Oral Roberts,

the Golden Grizzlies celebrated in a huddle on the court.

It's the fourth straight season a team with a losing record has made the NCAA tournament. Each of the previous three — Siena in 2002, North Carolina-Asheville in 2003 and Florida A&M last year — won the "play-in" game, then lost to the No. 1 seed in the first round.

Oakland finished 7-9 in the conference and was the seventh seed in the tournament. The Grizzlies never won more than two games in a row in the regular season, but have a five-game winning streak after three straight tournament victories.

"This season, we've been through a lot of adversity, a lot of tough losses," Marshall said. "It couldn't get no worse for us."

"We just wanted to go out there and play, and that's all we wanted to do. The pressure wasn't on us. It was on them."

Two more teams advanced to the NCAA's. In the Horizon, Wisconsin-Milwaukee beat Detroit 59-58; in the Sun Belt, Louisiana-Lafayette beat Denver 88-69.

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isn't having
effect 76ers
were hoping for

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Johnson makes
spring debut
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